RECOLLECTIONS OF AN IRISH JUDGE

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M. M.cD. Bodkin

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN IRISH JUDGE

PRESS, BAR AND PARLIAMENT

BY

M. M'D. BODKIN, K.C.

WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR IN PHOTOGRAVURE

LONDON
HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED
PATERNOSTER ROW
1914

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RECOLLECTIONS OF AN IRISH JUDGE

CHAPTER I

OLD TIMES IN THE WEST OF IRELAND

An apology—The origin of the Twelve Tribes—"The poor man's doctor"—Sir Dominick Corrigan—Convivial Connaught—The padded table—Tom Bodkin of Kilclooney—Hunting the wren—"Big Joe McDonnell" of Doo Castle—"Ready money for the lemons"—A twenty-one tumblers man—"Sabbatarians"—A fox hunt by moonlight—The culprit on the bench.

I WANT to begin with an explanation and an apology instead of a preface, and though I now put the few words I have to say on that head at the beginning of the first chapter where they have the best chance of being read, I wrote them when the book was finished that they might indicate not merely what I meant to do, but as far as I could judge what I had done.

This book must not be taken as anything in the nature of an autobiography; it has no such presumptuous pretension. Its purpose is only to describe the interesting men whom I have met, events I have witnessed, and stories I have heard during a long and varied career at the Press, Bar and Parliament.

Like the fly on the wheel, if I did not help much in the revolution, I had a chance of seeing how it went round. I have been mixed up in many exciting events, I have met many remarkable men. Gladstone and other leaders of the Liberal parties were familiar to me during my time in Parliament.

With Parnell I had at least one very remarkable interview. Justin McCarthy, William O'Brien, John Dillon, T. P. O'Connor and other Irish leaders I can count as personal friends. I had an interview with Leo XIII at the Vatican, and with Roosevelt at the White House. I think I may fairly claim a unique experience of the Stage. All the great actors of the present generation I have seen on the boards and gossiped with behind the scenes. Of the Irish Judges and leaders of the Irish Bar I have many stories to tell from hearsay or from personal knowledge. Some slight description of the manner of life on the Irish Press and at the Irish Bar may not be wholly without interest, and possibly a few new characters worth knowing may be introduced to the reader.

Though I have tried hard to keep myself and my belongings out of the book, it was inevitable that the first personal pronoun should occasionally obtrude itself, especially in earlier years when "I" was the centre of the world and the surrounding circle very small.

For the rest, it is gossip rather than history I have written, giving the go-by for the most part to serious events and retailing the humorous stories or amusing incidents that have come my way.

My father was a Bodkin of Galway. We have it on the high authority of Lever that

> The Bodkins sneeze at the grim Chinese,
> *They* come from the Phœnicians.

Moreover, they boast themselves one of the famous Twelve Tribes of Ye Ancient Citie of Galway. Many and various are the accounts of the origin of the Tribes. I only remember one which the great preacher and famous humorist, Father Tom Burke, O.P., of whom I shall have more to say later on, used to tell with infinite relish. It was a version, I may add, not popular with members of the Tribes.

In the good old times a Spanish ship was wrecked off the coast of Galway. The crew were rescued and brought before the King of Connaught, who was a mighty monarch in those days. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed

in the least like the King of Connaught. There was, however, one serious defect in his gorgeous get-up. Like Achilles, he was vulnerable in the heel. In plain English, the resplendent sovereign went barefoot. It is not surprising, therefore, that he cast covetous eyes at the stout leather *brogues* in which the feet of the Spanish prisoners were encased. Pair after pair he tried them on himself vainly, as the wicked sisters tried on the slipper of Cinderella. The feet of the monarch were of royal proportions, and the kingly toes could not be squeezed into any one of the brogues.

Thereupon he returned the prisoners to the King of Spain with handsome presents for his brother sovereign, and a request, couched in the choicest language of diplomacy, that his Majesty of Spain should send in return twelve pairs of the biggest brogues in his kingdom. Either the Connaught King's handwriting was illegible or an initial letter got obliterated by the salt water. This much, at least, is certain : when the document came to the eyes of the King of Spain it read " twelve pairs of the biggest rogues in Spain." Very willingly the King complied with the strange request, the rogues were collected by proclamation and the cargo dispatched. Thus were founded the Twelve Tribes of Galway. But it is not always safe to tell this story in mixed company in Connaught.

I come of a medical family. My father was a doctor, my elder and only brother was a doctor, my three brothers-in-law were doctors and my eldest nephew belonged to the same profession.

My father's name and fame are still remembered through the length and breadth of the western province, where he was affectionately known as " the poor man's doctor " by reason of his special kindness to the poor. From his residence in Tuam his practice extended to the remotest corner of Galway and Mayo, even to the outlying islands of Arran, Clare and Achill. In the days before railways he frequently drove sixty miles on a relay of outside cars to visit a patient.

As a boy I had often accompanied him on many of his calls, and so learnt to know and love western peasants,

who in instinct and manner are the finest gentlemen in the world.

It is perhaps not unnatural that I should overestimate my father's reputation, but I am fortified by the opinion of his class-fellow and lifelong friend, Sir Dominick Corrigan, who once said to me, "If your father had settled in Dublin he would have beaten us all."

As no sort of sequence is attempted in these roundabout recollections, as well here as elsewhere may be said a few words about the most famous physician of his generation. Sir Dominick Corrigan, as I remember him in the very height of his fame, was the least affected or pretentious of men. The mysticism of the medical man had no attraction for him. He did not believe in humouring the hypochondriac, however rich or important.

On one occasion he was visited by a very wealthy old gentleman, who regarded his own ailments, real or imaginary, the one thing of supreme importance in the universe.

The patient began a history of his health, dating from his earliest childhood. Sir Dominick listened blandly for a moment, then lapsed into a brown study. Before the narrative had carried the patient through a boyish attack of the measles the great doctor stood up, shook hands, wished him a cordial good morning, pocketed his fee and rang the bell for the next of the expectant crowd that all day and every day thronged his parlours.

As the utterly bewildered patient was being bowed politely to the door he found courage to stammer out :

"Is there anything I should take, Doctor ?"

"Yes, yes," said the famous doctor, "take a little seakale occasionally with your dinner."

"Is there nothing else ?" gasped the dumbfounded patient.

"You may have a little melted butter over it," said the doctor.

My father used to tell a story of his old friend that ran somewhat on the same lines. A very able, but simple-minded bishop, the late Dr. Duggan, by his advice visited

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"The Poor Man's Doctor."

Sir Dominick while in Dublin and returned enraptured with the skill of the great physician.

"You country doctors," said his lordship, "are well enough in your way, but in diagnosis and treatment you are not in it with the great Dublin consultants who trust to diet, not physic. What do you think Corrigan ordered me to take at my breakfast?"

"I am sure I cannot say."

"Toast."

"Well, there was nothing very recondite about that."

"Perhaps not, but was I to have it buttered or unbuttered?"

"Unbuttered."

"Wrong."

"Buttered then, I suppose."

"On one side or on both?"

"On both."

"Wrong again. He specially insisted that it should be buttered only on one side. It is an apparently unimportant detail like that that the nice discrimination of the really great physician is displayed."

On another occasion my father brought Corrigan down specially to see a wealthy patient of his in the County of Galway. Sir Dominick was much more confident than my father of the patient's recovery. Still, with the doctor's proverbial caution he declined to commit himself. "In a week's time," he said, "I expect he will be completely out of danger." Within a week's time the patient was dead. When Sir Dominick met my father some time after he inquired:

"Well, Bodkin, how is our patient?"

"Dead."

"You don't tell me so. I suppose his people regard me as an absolute fraud?"

"On the contrary, they consider you a prophet; a medical magician."

"In the name of wonder, why?"

"Do you remember what you told them?"

"That the patient would recover."

" No, you said in a week's time he would be out of danger."

" Well ? "

" He died the last hour of the last day of the week. They are convinced if he had lived another hour he would have been safe."

One other story may be slipped in here characteristic of the genial Corrigan's good-humour. He had for a patient a prominent solicitor named Meldon, a contemporary of his own, and like himself a martyr to well-earned gout. Corrigan advised him to abstain from champagne : he took the advice, and his gout almost entirely disappeared. It chanced, however, some months later, that he was dining at a big public banquet side by side with his physician. The champagne was of an attractive brand, but Meldon reluctantly covered his glass with his hand as the bottle came round. To his amazement Corrigan's glass was regularly filled and drained. Flesh and blood could stand it no longer.

" Corrigan," he began, " didn't you tell me champagne was bad for gout ? "

" So it is. How is your gout since you gave it up ? "

" Almost gone. But——"

" Well ? "

" You are as great a victim to the gout as ever I was."

" Greater, my dear fellow, greater."

" Then why in the devil's name do you drink champagne?"

"I will answer your question, Meldon, by another. Which do you prefer, your health or your champagne ? "

" My health, of course."

" Well, I prefer my champagne."

There was no more to be said.

My father had many stories to tell of the rollicking, devil-may-care gentry of Galway and Mayo, stories which acquit Charles Lever of the charge of exaggeration. The two chief heroes of the stories were John Bodkin of Kilclooney, M.P. for the County of Galway, and " Big Joe McDonnell," M.P., of Doo Castle (aptly so named), member for the County of Mayo.

In those days it was a common custom after the ladies had retired from dinner to lock the door on the inside and

throw the key out of the window. Then every man was compelled, in the immortal words of Betsy Prig, "to drink fair." A pint of salt water was the penalty for refusing a bumper of claret at every round of the decanter. Is it to be wondered at that many of the guests spent the remnant of the night on the carpet under the dining-table? Nor were these customs wholly confined to the West. I have now in my possession a vast round table of shiny black mahogany with a huge mahogany trunk for its central pillar. It is reputed to have been the dining-table of Lord Mountjoy, which I deported from his former mansion in Henrietta Street. When it first came into my possession the under edges were carefully padded with worn green baize. I can find no other explanation of the padding of the table than the host's considerate regard for the heads of his guests when they chanced to fall under it.

The gentry of Connaught were indeed as high-spirited and irresponsible as schoolboys. One St. Stephen's Day, about three-quarters of a century ago, my father was one of a large house party at Kilclooney. In the County of Galway St. Stephen's Day was always the great fox-hunting meet of the year. On that particular day the "Galway Blazers" were to draw the famous fox covers of Kilclooney, but the previous night a black frost had set in and made fox-hunting impossible.

Here were a score of red-coated gentlemen with nothing; absolutely nothing, to do. For a while they grouped themselves impatiently at the windows in vain expectation of a thaw. Suddenly a bright idea struck the host. "Come on, boys," he cried, "we'll hunt the wren!"

The suggestion was received with a whoop of welcome, and the whole party of the chief men of the county sallied forth in clamorous pursuit of the "King of All Birds," whom they chased through hedges and ditches till sundown, returning with a wholesome appetite and an all-consuming thirst to dinner at Kilclooney.

The Galway gentleman was a firm believer in the philosophy of Horace, he took the good which to-day had to give him with no thought of yesterday or to-morrow. John

Bodkin of Kilclooney was involved in a Chancery suit in which a valuable slice of his large estate was at stake. An essential affidavit was to be sworn by the owner of the property. Early one morning his solicitor drove about six miles from Tuam to Kilclooney to find his erratic client at home.

"Go into Tuam to swear an affidavit!" protested John Bodkin; "quite impossible, my dear fellow. It's the best day for trout that has come this year" (he was the best fly fisher in Galway). "We may not have another like it for twelve months."

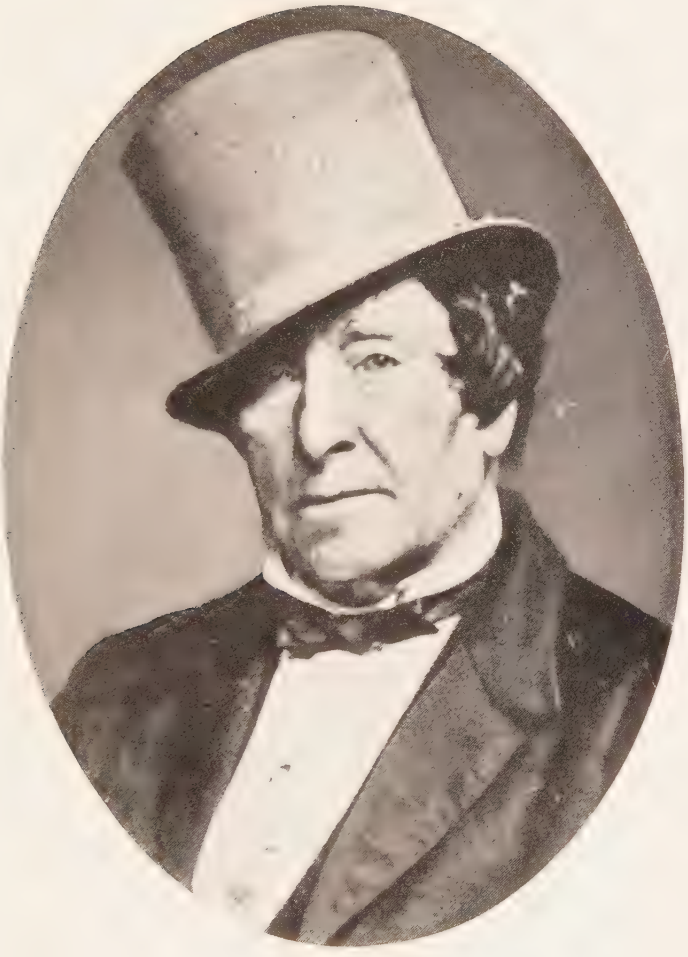
The solicitor, however, helped by my father, over-persuaded him. He actually got on the car for the drive, but as the horse was starting he shouted, "Wait a moment!"

Then plunging through the open door of the room he was pleased to call his study, he picked up his trout-rod and vanished through the back door into the open world beyond. There were fish to be caught, and affidavit and estate might go hang.

Even John Bodkin of Kilclooney, however, pales his ineffectual fire before "Big Joe McDonnell" of Doo Castle. For many years he had represented his county in Parliament without even once opening his lips in the House. Politics apart, the position of Member of Parliament was very useful to Joe. He found the immunity from debt which it conferred particularly convenient. For Joe always abounded in creditors. The righteous indignation of the Irish landlords of our own time—when the tenants obstructed the "processes of the law"—is a little comical when it is remembered that a favourite landlord amusement in the old days was to make the process server swallow the writs he came to serve.

A Dublin wine merchant, from whom Joe had carried off to Doo Castle (on credit of course) a canal boat of his choicest wines, began after a time, possibly made nervous from echoing rumours of Joe's reputation, to press hard for payment.

Joe responded by a cordial invitation to visit him at Doo Castle, and the merchant went. It was a scene of open-door rollicking hospitality. The good merchant's choicest wines



"Big Joe McDonnell"
Of Doo Castle, one time M.P. for Mayo.

were drunk by the jovial host and guests in tumblerfuls. After a few days he could endure it no longer. By this time he had almost abandoned hope of payment, but he thought he might make some salvage from the wreck. One morning he appealed to Joe in the room he called his study at Doo Castle.

"Mr. McDonnell," he said, "may I have a word with you?"

"Certainly, my dear boy, certainly. Only too delighted."

"Well, I am a little embarrassed, and you may help me out. I have an order from a very old customer for some of the vintage wines I have supplied to you; unfortunately I have none in stock, so I thought you might perhaps let me have some back. I would allow you of course the full price in your account."

"That's kind of you, very kind indeed."

"I would not inconvenience you for the world, but it seems to me that the gentlemen I have met here would just as soon have whiskey punch as those wines."

"As soon have it!" interrupted Joe; "they would a great deal sooner have it, if they could get it."

"Then in the name of goodness," cried the merchant, startled out of his prim propriety, "why not let them have whiskey punch instead of costly wine?"

"My dear sir," whispered Joe confidentially, with his hand on the other's knee, "where do you think would I find the ready money for the lemons?"

As I have said, Joe never opened his lips in the House of Commons, but there was no more persuasive speaker on the hustings, none more adroit in the art of bamboozling a crowd.

Let a single illustration suffice. On one occasion Joe, standing as the champion of the "ould faith" in Mayo, was caught by a horrified supporter eating meat on Friday. Instantly his popularity departed. There was a shout of derision when he appeared on a platform. "Give him an egg, boys, to take the taste of mate off his mouth!" and an egg whizzed past his ear. "Big Joe" was equal to the occasion. He drew a letter from his pocket.

"Does anyone here," he roared out in a voice of thunder that dominated the tumult, "does anyone here know the handwriting of His Holiness Pope Pius the Ninth?"

There was a moment's pause. No one seemed to know the handwriting of His Holiness. Without waiting for an answer, Joe read the letter at the top of his voice :—

"My dear Joe,

"I am well pleased to hear you are fighting for the old faith down in Mayo. You are neither to fast nor abstain while the good work is in hand.

"With kindest regards for yourself and the boys that are helping you, I remain,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Pope Pius IX."

A roar of applause followed the name, and "Big Joe" was once more the popular hero.

"Big Joe McDonnell" drank twenty-one tumblers of punch regularly every night after his dinner, so I have heard from a dozen eyewitnesses. But I was privileged to see a letter written a short time before his death, in his seventy-sixth year, in which he strongly recommended temperance to the young men of Ireland. There was this much justification for his homily, that no man ever saw him drunk or even under the influence of liquor. The pernicious habit of tippling in the morning or afternoon was unknown to the wild gentry of Ireland. They tasted no stimulant before dinner, but they dined about four o'clock and after that the supply of liquor was unlimited.

In those days there was amongst the Irish gentry in the West a class called "Sunday men," and to that class for many years of his life "Big Joe" belonged. "Sunday men" during weekdays were beleaguered in their fortresses by an army of bailiffs, but Sunday was to them veritably a day of liberty and rest. The story goes that "Big Joe" being hotly pursued by a bailiff went to earth in the hospitable house of the attorney who had taken out the judgment against him. There he dined, drank punch, played cards and won heavily. But a little after midnight he said to his host, "It's time for

me to be going home. It is Sunday morning now, and I have already kept that poor fellow of yours too long waiting outside in the cold."

On another occasion Joe inaugurated a fox hunt by moonlight. There was danger that the huntsmen might be hunted if they appeared in the daytime, so they hunted and killed their fox by the light of a full moon and returned gaily to an early breakfast in Doo Castle.

Justice as administered by those country squires, who in those days monopolized the magisterial bench, was a curious production. The " code under the palm tree " was not less hampered by any settled system of law. Yet there is a story extant in the West of Ireland that proves that those magistrates of the old school realized the responsibility of their office.

Mr. Burke was a magistrate of large property and position in his county, but he was not exempt from the failings of his class and time. On festive occasions when flustered with flowing cups, or full of supper and distempering drinks, he gave some trouble to the police.

When summoned before himself, the only magistrate that habitually sat in the local court, the culprit on the bench was accustomed to cross-examine the indulgent police sergeant as to the character of the offence.

" You say the man was drunk, sergeant. Was he incapable ? "

" I wouldn't go as far as that, your worship."

" Did he resist the police ? "

" Not what you would call resist."

" Remember you are on your oath."

" Well, there was a bit of a scrimmage."

" Disgraceful, disgraceful. How often has this man been before me ? "

The charge sheets were examined and disclosed a number of previous convictions. " An habitual offender," was the magistrate's stern comment from the bench. " I fear I must inflict a sharp term of imprisonment."

The sergeant pleaded for mercy, and ultimately a fine was imposed with a stern caution to the culprit as to what

was likely to happen if he was again brought before the court.

The popular story runs that " Big Joe's " assets consisted of a flute, a bagpipes and an Irish setter. It is certain he was an accomplished player on the bagpipes. His bagpipes came into possession of his granddaughter, Miss D'Arcy, who presented them to the National Museum. It is said that on one occasion " Big Joe " determined to enliven the dull routine of the House of Commons by a spirited tune on his favourite pipes, and with this intent had carried his instrument with him into the front lobby, but was captured by his friends at the door of the legislative chamber.

CHAPTER II

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

Narrow escapes—Efforts of memory—"Wages, not punishment"—Keeping the peace—Innocent arson—Father Delany—"A New Departure in Catholic Education"—A question of honour—"Our Bill"—"Barred out."

THERE is a strong temptation to set down here something of the thoughts, feelings, incidents and enjoyment of my young days. Looking back as one looks from a distance on a valley on which the sunshine is smiling, those days of one's youth are so vivid, so real, that one is apt to forget how little interest they have for outsiders. Besides, I am pledged to brevity. I am writing not as an actor, but as a spectator; I am telling of things seen and heard, and I will compress the days of my youth into as few pages as possible.

When I was just two years old, so I have been told, I was industriously engaged in humble imitation of the gardener sowing seed on the broad flags in front of our house in Tuam, in confident hope of an abundant harvest. I went over the verge, tumbled down a flight of stone steps and gashed my temple on a sharp angle at the bottom. The whole incident is as clear in my mind as if it happened yesterday. I vividly remember my mother sitting with me in her lap, holding the wound together while the servant scoured the town for my father. Then darkness closed round me, and I remember nothing else for years. A deep dinge over my eyebrow remains as a memento of the incident.

Just such another accident may be mentioned, though a little out of its order. I wonder how many reckless boys have had a similar experience! It chanced when I was

about ten years old my father one day brought home a revolver, a queer, stumpy, old-fashioned thing quite unlike the modern weapon. There were six barrels all the same length revolving on a pivot, and the muzzle looked like a circular section of honeycomb. But it was good enough to fire boyish imagination already superheated by the Wild West stories of Mayne Reid and Fenimore Cooper. I watched my father practise with it in the garden, I discovered where he had hidden it in his study. Then one afternoon I found myself there alone with the fascinating weapon in my hand. It was uncapped, which to my boyish mind meant it was unloaded. But I was not to be cheated out of the treat I had promised myself. I set the head of a match to the nipple, pressed the circle of six barrels to my forehead and tugged at the trigger. Luckily for me the improvised cap dropped off with the jerk. Having carefully replaced it, I put the pistol between my knees and pulled hard with two fingers. The barrels revolved, and the cock rose and fell. There was a stunning report, and the room was filled with the smoke and pungent smell of gunpowder. When I recovered from my terror I discovered a little round bullet-hole through the bottom of the shutter instead of through my foolish head. Strangely enough, the report was not heard outside the closed door of the study. I never confessed and I was never discovered, but I fancy I will never again be so near death till I die.

If I have any qualification at all for the task I have here set myself, it is a memory curiously effective and defective. What it catches it catches easily and holds, but then there are many things it never catches at all. I find it almost impossible to remember a name, a date or a place. But anything else I read, hear or see I can recall and retain with curious accuracy. In my younger days I could repeat a long poem verbatim after one or two readings. Later on, as a reporter, without a single note I could write two columns and a half of a three-column speech, a great part in the words of the speaker. This faculty, as may be imagined, was very serviceable to a newspaper writer. I seem to have been born with this mental equipment.

In yet one other respect the child was father to the man. I was the most untidy of children, and the good nuns who were my earliest guides in the paths of knowledge were continually aghast at my performance and appearance.

There was an old-fashioned well in the convent grounds where a bucket was let down by a rope and windlass to the water far down at the bottom of the deep, black hole. In a moment of inspiration, one of the good Sisters threatened that if I came dirty to school again I should be let down in the bucket and washed in the mysterious water in the bottom of the well. Little the timid lady appreciated the vagaries of a boy's mind. My imagination was fired at the prospect of the adventure. To me it was wages and not punishment. Next morning on my way to school I qualified at every puddle I met for the delightful expedition, presenting myself before the eye of the horrified nun a mass of mud, eagerly claiming the punishment of my misconduct.

From the convent school I passed at a very early age to the Christian Brothers. But here after a few months my education was interrupted by a very curious incident that is perhaps worth recording as indicative of the sectarian feeling in those days, the injustice it inflicted and the reprisals it provoked.

At that time sectarianism was rampant in Tuam. There was in the town a Protestant vicar, the reverend Mr. Seymore, who felt he had a mission for the forcible conversion of benighted Papists. The Catholic festival of Corpus Christi was always celebrated by a procession in the grounds of the Catholic Cathedral, with the Blessed Sacrament carried under a canopy. All the inhabitants of the town and of the neighbouring country, men and women, young and old, flocked to this festival. On one occasion it was subjected to a startling interruption. As the procession, chanting a solemn strain with the Host in its brilliant setting exposed to the reverent gaze of the worshippers, moved slowly along the Cathedral grounds, the people were aware of the wild figure of the militant vicar perched on a barrel in front of the great iron gates. The barrel on which

he stood was stuffed full of Bibles for the use of his expected converts. Of a sudden he waved his arms over his head and shouted in a voice of thunder :

" Repent, you blind idolaters, who worship a wafer for a God ! "

What else he would have said was never known. There was a rush of the angry crowd, the barrel was stove in and the flying missionary pelted with Bibles through the streets of the town. It is more than half a century ago, but I remember it more vividly than if it were yesterday. The wild figure in full flight with long coat-tails streaming in the wind, and the shower of Bibles with the leaves fluttering and torn that followed him.

When the feast of Corpus Christi again approached the enterprising vicar applied for police protection, fearing, as he swore, a breach of the peace. The demand was granted, and fifty extra police were drafted into the town. It happens that my father's house stands in the direct route, almost midway between the Protestant vicarage and the Catholic Cathedral. Early in the morning of Corpus Christi, the District Inspector encamped his forces on the stone steps and along the railings facing our house. Later on the worthy representative of the Church militant made his appearance, armed to the teeth with Bibles. The District Inspector politely accosted him :

" I beg your pardon, Mr. Seymore," he said, " but I cannot allow you to pass."

The amazement and indignation of the vicar passed all bounds.

" I have a duty to perform," he said. " A sacred duty to rebuke idolatry."

" And I," retorted the inspector, " have a duty to perform, to prevent a breach of the peace."

" You were sent here to protect me from violence."

" I will prevent you from provoking it. The best way to keep the peace is to keep you where you are."

In vain were the protests and threats of spiritual and temporal punishment. The unfortunate vicar was hoist with his own petard. All day he paced up and down the

dusty road in front of the imperturbable police, like Carleton's little tailor, "dry mouldy for want of a beating."

This same vicar was grand vizier to Bishop Plunkett, who lived in a handsome palace with beautifully wooded grounds close to the town. Amongst the Catholics of Tuam, who formed the overwhelming majority of the population, the proselytizing vicar got the chief credit, or discredit, for the sharp practices of his lordship.

I was in the very lowest class of the old Christian Brothers' school that stood on the hill on the outskirts of Tuam, when the catastrophe occurred which I am about to relate. The school had been erected at the cost of something over £1000 (collected amongst the Catholic townspeople), on a site acquired at a twenty-one years' lease from the Protestant bishop, who was head landlord of a third of the town. It was naturally assumed that the lease would be renewed. But to the surprise and indignation of the Catholics, the day it expired the Christian Brothers got notice to quit and, to add insult to injury, it was decreed that their school should be converted into an active branch of the Irish Church Mission Proselytizing Association.

It is only fair to say that the great majority of the Protestants of the town were as indignant as the Catholics at the sharp practices to which the Christian Brothers were subjected; but the law was the law, and there was nothing for it but submission.

So the Brothers thought at least, but the boys were of a different opinion. In those days no National school was allowed by the Most Rev. Dr. McHale in the Archdiocese of Tuam, so the Christian Brothers had the monopoly of the learning in the town. They were immensely popular, not only with the parents, but also with the boys. The news of the eviction of the good Brothers awakened a ferment of youthful indignation, and provoked a wild project of revenge.

The Christian Brothers were in due course evicted from the school, and for one night it remained derelict, pending the triumphant entrance of the missionary society. That night was enough. How well I remember it all! It is painted

on my memory with the vivid colouring of extreme childhood which no scene painting of after life can rival.

The buzzing of a vast, mysterious conspiracy was around me during our last day at the old Christian Brothers' school.

Only the ringleaders knew exactly what the project was, but even the youngest of us knew that something strange, daring, terrible and heroic was in progress.

After dinner that night I stole out, by arrangement with a larger boy, whom I met at the corner of the street, to take part in the conspiracy. From all sides boys converged in the darkness of the night on the deserted schoolhouse. How it happened I cannot say, or why it happened, but I have a suspicion that some secret influence was at work to keep the police of the town close in their barracks that night, with eyes and ears shut tight against all warnings from without.

Eagerly the boys crept through broken windows into the deserted school, which they were wont to enter with such decorous reluctance. How strange and still and solemn it seemed, the contrast how sharp between the dismal silence of that night and the noisy life of the day! For a while we were all abashed by the ghosts of old discipline and decorum that haunted the place. But the pause was a brief one, the calm before the storm. A hundred lucifer matches flashed a sudden blaze, candles were lit and the work of destruction begun. Oh, how delightful the conjunction of duty and pleasure for a small boy when breaking windows was an act of supreme merit, and smashing desks and chairs a most creditable exploit!

I was talking only the other day to an old schoolmate who, like myself when a mere child, participated in that glorious escapade. He has since attained a high ecclesiastical position. He is the mildest and gentlest of men, but he remembers that scene as well as I remember it for one of the most delightful, tumultuous, exciting episodes of his life.

Here in the sanctum of learning where we had listened soberly to lessons, where we had mildly obeyed the voice of

command, where we had felt the avenging twinge of the cane ; here in the very home of learning and discipline we had one wild hour of such outrageous and tumultuous liberty as I verily believe no other boys have ever known before or since.

We raged through the place—ink bottles flew in crashing showers through the windows. The furniture, desks, chairs and tables, was smashed to firewood and piled in great heaps all over the floor. The lesson-books, torn to shreds, provided the kindling material, and soon the entire building roared and blazed in one vast conflagration.

That was a bonfire, if you like, and we danced and cheered round it with a will. All night it blazed on the hill, on the outskirts of the town ; long after we boys had been reclaimed by our anxious parents and slept peaceably in our beds with the consciousness of a good work well done, that great fire still blazed triumphantly, and in all the town of Tuam no hand could be found, Catholic or Protestant, to attempt its extinction. When the grey morning dawned the old schoolhouse was no more.

There was a trial afterwards at the Galway Assizes of some of the boys who had been ringleaders in the escapade, but it came to nothing. A jury of Protestants and Catholics concurred in the acquittal. When the new schoolhouse came to be built for the Christian Brothers on a better site, the subscription was more liberal than before, and almost every Protestant with the exception of the vicar and bishop participated.

It would seem that bigotry and intolerance were burned up in that big fire, for in all Ireland there is now no town in which all classes and creeds dwell together in more perfect amity than in Tuam.

One other incident of those schooldays is perhaps worth recalling, as illustrating once again the peculiar memory that was to serve me well in after life.

The Rev. Brother Lowe was accustomed to give us each day half an hour's religious instruction, admirably conceived and delivered. For the better enjoyment of the discourse I planted my arms on the desk and my face on my arms in

the attitude of profound slumber, and listened attentively to the lecture. The Brother saw me. He drew the obvious, though as it happened erroneous, conclusion from my attitude, and interrupted his discourse to call out sharply :

" Bodkin, you have not listened to a single word."

I protested.

" Then tell me something I have said," demanded the Brother sternly.

Forthwith I commenced the lecture from the beginning, repeated it verbatim while the lecturer listened in dumb surprise, till I wound up with his final exclamation, " Bodkin, you have not listened to a single word."

Forty years later the Superior-General of the Christian Brothers, Rev. Brother Moylan, who was present as a boy, reminded me of the incident, which had drifted away into an obscure corner of my memory where I never would have found it but for him.

It is indeed a little curious how, as I write, a thousand memories of my young days which were asleep and forgotten awake and press for recognition. My boyhood with all its thoughts and cares, and small adventures that seemed so wonderful when they happened, have reshaped themselves like vivid pictures in my memory. Even now the trivialities of those long summers' days spent in birds-nesting and fishing, the snowball battles and skating are full of intense interest to me. I cannot reason away the notion that if I could tell them as they happened they would be of interest to readers who have like precious little memories of their own from which they would not part for the world. It is not without an effort that I compel myself to skip those delightful years.

From the Christian Brothers I passed to the Jesuit College of Tullabeg, then perhaps the best intermediate school in Ireland. In the higher classes I had for master (inestimable advantage) the famous Jesuit, Rev. Father William Delany, afterwards for so many years Rector of University College, St. Stephen's Green, and Provincial of the Order, to whom more than to any other man Catholics are indebted for the boon of university education. When I first met Father

THE REV. WILLIAM DELANY, S.J., EX-PROVINCIAL

Delany, a man of about thirty-five, he looked a mere boy, almost as young as any of his class.

Under his guidance, study was a delight. He made us boys do absolutely what he wished, however seemingly impossible. One of our feats was a bit out of the common. At the public display of the college, called "the annual conversazione," three of us presented ourselves without books to repeat from memory, parse, scan and translate passages selected at random from the second book of Virgil's "Æneid," a feat which we all three successfully performed.

No one who ever knew Father Delany need be told that he is a man of fascinating manner. It is not easy to describe the charm of his voice and smile. Bigotry and prejudice could never survive in his company.

Once upon a time Father Delany attended the meeting of the British Association, held that year in Sheffield. The day after his arrival he met in the offices of the Association a Sheffield man who, after five minutes' talk, insisted that he should be his guest during his stay in that town.

"You don't know what you ask," retorted Father Delany, "you don't know that I'm a Jesuit; look out for your silver spoons."

"I'll risk it," said his would-be host.

Father Delany, however, imagined that he would have more personal freedom at an hotel, and declined the invitation to the manifest disappointment of the other.

As he turned away, another Sheffield man touched him on the shoulder.

"Don't be a fool," he said abruptly; "I couldn't help hearing what was said just now, and you will be a fool if you refuse that invitation. That is the best fellow in all Sheffield, there is nowhere you would have half so good a time."

Later in the day the invitation was cordially renewed and gratefully accepted, and the host justified the eulogium of his friend.

Some days before the close of the Session he said to Father Delany, "I want to give a little dinner-party.

You invite your friends and I will invite the most prominent of our townsmen to meet them."

Father Delany declares that he never sat down to a more incongruous or a more delightful dinner. Amongst his guests were the Rev. Monsignor Molloy of the Catholic University, and Professor Haughton, the most brilliant and the most versatile of the Fellows of Trinity College.

A little while before Professor Haughton, whose numerous professions included the medical, had devoted his leisure to devising a more merciful method of capital punishment.

Death by strangulation he regarded as specially painful, and he demonstrated that a longer drop and a more flexible silk rope would produce instant and almost painless death by dislocation of the neck.

When the experiment was first tried, however, the result was startling. Whether the drop was too long or the silk rope too pliable, the head of the criminal was shorn clean from the body.

It chanced that after dinner Professor Haughton entered into an animated discussion with a shrewd Sheffield man, in which the gifted Professor had the worst of it.

"I think we had better let the subject drop," he said at last.

"How many feet, Professor?" was the telling retort.

At the close of the evening the host ventured on a question which had been perplexing the company.

"Father Delany," he said, "none of us ever met a Jesuit before we met you, and we are anxious to know what exactly a Jesuit is. We are tiled to-night; if you tell us the secret it will never go farther."

Father Delany referred them to Dr. Johnson's definition, but they refused to accept it.

At last he said, "I can only try to enlighten you by a little anecdote. A friend of mine, and a Jesuit like myself, was lately driving in the neighbourhood of Belfast. He had a very poor horse, which the driver stimulated by a torrent of abuse.

"'Get on, you cripple,' he cried, 'get on, you Papist, get on, you divil, get on, you b——y old Jesuit!'

"In a quiet interval my friend put to the driver the question you have put to me to-night.

"'I have heard you call your horse a Jesuit,' he said; 'can you tell me, my friend, what a Jesuit is?'

"The man scratched his head. 'Well, sir, I don't know precisely, but it's something a deal worse than the devil.'"

Someone at the dinner must have broken faith, for next day the story with the Belfast man's definition of a Jesuit was published in one of the principal newspapers of Sheffield.

My friendship with Father Delany stretched from my schooldays far into after life, and with that friendship there always mingled something of the affectionate reverence of the pupil for his favourite master. Just after I left he became rector of the college, and during his rectorship I often renewed my boyhood by a visit to old scenes and associations.

About this time I earned his special favour by a pamphlet I wrote over the signature of "A Catholic Barrister," entitled "A New Departure in Catholic Education," in reply to some strictures not less unjust than severe on the Jesuit system of education which had just been published by the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Petre, afterwards Lord Petre. My reply had been provoked by the suggestion that espionage was encouraged in Jesuit schools, a suggestion to my own knowledge wholly opposed to the fact. The only instance of espionage I remember in my schooldays was an amateur spy informing the Higher Line Prefect, Father Charlie Walsh, that two boys were smoking (a high crime and misdemeanour) behind the ball alley. His reward for the information was a resounding box on the ear.

"You little sneak," thundered the prefect, "that will teach you to come tale-bearing to me."

This could hardly be called encouraging espionage.

Another incident which occurred later under the rectorship of Father Delany illustrates how honour amongst the boys was utilized and encouraged in the conduct of the school.

It happened I was present as a visitor at the annual

athletic sports. The most popular event of the day was a blindfold race, to be won by the boy who first passed through a pair of goal-posts a quarter of a mile from the starting-point. In such a race it was plain chance must decide, skill or speed counted for nothing at all. Fifty or sixty boys, their eyes bound up by the hard-worked head prefect, stood in a row ready and eager for the race. I was beside Father Delany when he walked down the long line of boys, their eyes bound up in variegated handkerchiefs that gleamed bright in the hot sunshine, one foot planted in front of the other ready for the start. Like a general reviewing his troops, Father Delany passed along. When he reached the centre he stopped short and cried in a voice that carried clear as a bell to the end of the row :

" Remember, boys, you are on your honour that you cannot see."

At the word there was a wavering and a breaking up along the line. A score of boys shamefacedly quitted the ranks and walked with self-convicting certitude to the prefect to be re-bandaged. So long as it was a trial of cunning between boy and prefect it was lawful to best the enemy ; but honour once invoked was a self-imposed master whose orders could not be evaded.

It would be idle to deny that I was immensely proud of my pamphlet on Catholic Education, the first thing in the shape of a book for which I was responsible. It was read at the dinner-hour in the Jesuit refectories, in the great colleges both in England and Ireland. In some quarters it was attributed to Sir Charles Russell, and above all it created a new bond of sympathy between my dear old masters and myself.

While on this subject I may mention another matter of some importance in which I was associated with Father Delany. He was at that time hand and glove with the Duke of Marlborough, Lord-Lieutenant, and his son, Lord Randolph Churchill, the rising hope of the Tory party. Lord Randolph determined on an Intermediate Education Act for Ireland. Father Delany was naturally called into council. It chanced that a little while afterwards I visited

him at the college, and at his suggestion made a rough draft of the proposed measure. When we next met, the measure, almost unchanged, was half-way through the House of Commons.

"Well, Father Delany," I said, "our Bill is going through."

"Yes, Matt," he replied triumphantly, "and it is our Bill."

I have since, at times, been tempted to repent my humble share in the business. The Bill, whatever its merits, has, I fear, helped to foster cramming and kill culture in Ireland. But one good thing it certainly did. By the sharp test of competitive examination it dissipated for ever the prevalent myth that the Protestant intermediate schools were superior to the Catholic.

But I have got in front of my story.

When I left Tullabeg College, I was naturally anxious to try my luck at a university. I fancied, rightly or wrongly, that I would be able to keep myself going at Trinity College. But my mother had strong conscientious objections to the Protestant University, and we agreed to refer the matter to the decision of the great Dominican, Father Tom Burke. His verdict was conclusive. "No Catholic could enter Trinity College," he declared, "without danger of shipwreck of Faith and morals."

So I was barred out from a university training which two such different men as Cardinal Newman and Macaulay had taught me to long for. It is true I entered the so-called Catholic University, which had neither charter or endowment, and even obtained an exhibition on matriculation, but the business was so wholly futile that I abandoned it before six months was over, sacrificing my exhibition. A smattering of Terence was the only asset derived from that wasted six months. The National University has, however, recognized the sacrifice by the honorary degree of LL.D.

CHAPTER III

THE REPORTERS' ROOM

"The hieroglyphic monster"—A confiscated notebook—The slaves of the lamp—Tricks of the trade—Dick Adams—A slip of the pen—Lefroy—Guinee—"Old G."—Much virtue in quotation marks—Going to the devil with the country—"The Chief"—Mimic and story-teller.

WITHOUT further delay I entered for the Bar, and while learning law and eating dinners I contrived, by the influence of Bishop Duggan, to get a place as an unpaid probationer on the reporting staff of the *Freeman's Journal.*

I have described my entrance into Press life and my progress in its mysteries in a novel, "White Magic," mingling fact with fancy as fiction writers must. But the novel is not so widely read that it need deter me from giving a more prosaic account of my experiences.

Dickens describes how David Copperfield "tamed the savage hieroglyphic monster." The monster was more savage in his days than ours; Pitman has improved the breed. All the same, I cannot truly say I ever succeeded in bringing shorthand into subjection. I never found it pleasant or easy. It was not so much that I had no teacher outside the text of the handbooks, for in shorthand it is not precept but practice that tells. In my case, however, practice never made perfect. At first I tried to kill two birds with one stone. I translated a number of French books into English shorthand, and then transcribed the notes into English long-hand. But I soon found that learning shorthand by reading, or even by being read to, was learning to swim without entering the water. There was needed the living voice of the unconscious and unaccommodating speaker, and that necessary element many

eloquent preachers unconsciously supplied. Never since have I listened to so many sermons. But it was a risky occupation, for devout old ladies regarded my note-taking as a profanity and jogged the hand that held the pencil with pious elbows. This did not matter so much in my 'prentice days, but later when I was out of my time and was reporting for the *Freeman's Journal* a sermon of the famous Monsignor Capel, a formidable old lady in black bombazine and mittens forcibly confiscated my notebook. Recapture was impossible, so the sermon was not reported verbatim, and the eloquent preacher when he heard the cause did not bless the over-zealous intervener.

Though never a really proficient shorthand writer, I could stumble after a moderately slow speaker often half a sentence in the rear without coming to actual grief.

Newspaper life is a subject of very general curiosity. Yet it is surprising how little the outside public, whom he so assiduously serves, knows about the life and work of a reporter. A man cultivates acquaintance with his doctor and lawyer, with whom his consultations are rarely agreeable and always expensive. As he reads his newspaper every morning he has a pleasant chat, at the cost of a halfpenny or a penny, with at least fifty Pressmen, of whose work and ways he has as little notion as Aladdin had of the domestic life of the slave of the lamp. The universal newspaper reader must now and then be troubled with a twinge of curiosity as to how news is collected, and by whom.

To begin with, shorthand is the "Open Sesame" to a newspaper office; for all kinds of literary work it is useful, for Press work it is almost essential. I am writing the rough copy of these reminiscences in shorthand, sitting comfortably in an easy chair by the fire with my notebook on my knee. Later on I shall transcribe them with such corrections as may seem advisable. I find that both thoughts and words come more easily when they can get down at once on the paper and have not to wait for each other like a confused crowd at a church door.

But to the would-be reporter shorthand is not a matter of convenience, it is a necessity. It is the one test of com-

petence available. For success in the profession of the Press the aspirant will need quickness, tact, literary aptitude and a smattering of universal knowledge. But these cannot be tested at the door. If a man can write even a hundred words a minute and read them at sight he is worth a trial as a reporter.

But if shorthand gets him in, shorthand alone won't get him on. The young reporter who by virtue of his shorthand undertook to give a "*verbatim*" report of a military review was never a very brilliant success in his profession.

In England Press work is specialized, the Irish reporter is a Jack of all trades. Within an hour he must be gay at a wedding and sad at a funeral, he must know something about everything or must at least successfully "assume a knowledge if he hath it not." He must lecture learnedly on every theme. He must teach everybody their own business—the farmer farming, the painter painting, the sculptor sculpture, the musician music, the doctor medicine, the lawyer law, and so through the varying phases of human occupation.

A moral and intellectual Proteus he must be prepared to assume every mood that the occasion requires. There is nothing he must not be ready to describe at a moment's notice, and he must write just as much and just as little as may be required by his editor, dilute his thoughts into three columns or concentrate them into a paragraph.

The length or brevity of his description is not to be regulated by his experience, knowledge or imagination, or by his belief in the importance or triviality of the subject, but simply by the amount of available space. He must measure his thoughts with the editor's rule, and supply three inches or three yards as the occasion may require.

In the *Freeman's Journal*, as in every well-regulated Irish newspaper office, there is a chief reporter, whose duty is to set tasks to the rest. He knows, in his own expressive phrase, "what's on." He keeps a record of all public proceedings, he has an instinct for news. Each morning the reporters meet the chief in the reporters' room, are duly "marked" in a Doomsday Book for their respective tasks, and are dispatched through city and country on their

news-collecting missions. Wherever there is anything interesting to be seen or heard the reporter is there, nothing escapes his all-pervading activity. He writes for a busy and curious public not a word too few, not a word too many, so that he who runs (for tram or train) may read and understand.

A reporter is subdued to what he works in, and he becomes absorbed in his profession. There was a story in the reporting-room when I joined the staff of the *Freeman's Journal* concerning a venerable member who rejoiced in white hair, gold spectacles and abnormal respectability. On one occasion, so the legend ran, as he was crossing the ridge of old Carlisle Bridge he saw a man just under him sink for the third and last time in the mingled mud and water of the Liffey. Hastily he glanced at his watch as the head of the victim vanished.

"My poor fellow," he exclaimed, with professional sympathy, "you are unfortunately too late for the evening paper, but I'll give you a good par. to-morrow."

For this other story I can personally vouch. Early in my career I was dispatched by the "chief" to describe a novel and sensational performance at Hengler's Circus. Loo-Loo, a man dressed as a girl, was shot up by a powerful spring to grasp a trapeze high up in the centre of the great canvas dome of the circus. Rightly or wrongly I thought I detected a tremor, a certain suggestion of nervousness in the slim figure that stood crouching on the small platform close to the ground. The spring was released, and with a loud swish the figure shot like an arrow into the air. So swift was the flight, few could see the wild grasp of the distended fingers just miss the bar of the trapeze, or mark the strained body pause for a second in vacant space before it fell. It struck the edge of the safety net a hundred feet below and was jerked out into the box of the orchestra.

There was an instant tumult among the audience, who stampeded from the benches across the arena. While I was still dizzy with the horror of the scene, not knowing if the victim were alive or dead, a brother Pressman whispered in my ear :

"That will make a good par. for the Press Association if we get it off at once."

Many men of great ability were connected with the *Freeman's Journal* when I joined it on the lowest rung of the ladder. Amongst them was the reckless humorist Dick Adams, afterwards Judge Adams, of whom I have more to say later. Very little of his humour, however, crept into his articles. He was grand, solemn, almost sanctimonious. On religious subjects he was said, in the slang of the office, "to write with a quill from the wing of an archangel."

I remember once going home with him from the office in the not too small hours of the morning. He had written an orthodox, eloquent article on the Catholic University Question. Now in private conversation Dick would sometimes allude to the venerable Rector of the University, Monsignor Woodlock, as Monsignor Deadlock. We had almost reached home when a horrible suspicion smote him that by a slip of the pen he had introduced this pet name into the article. Back we trudged a weary mile through rain and darkness to find the suspicion was well founded. "Monsignor Deadlock" appeared conspicuously half a dozen times in the article. It was set up and stereotyped when we arrived, and had to be chiselled out of the plate.

Lefroy was another of the *Freeman* writers of those days, a bit of a cynic with a clear-cut, vigorous style not commonly associated with newspapers. He had a morbid passion for executions, then open to the Press, and described their horrors with a gruesome appreciation almost worthy of Poe. Ultimately he married a Lord Mayor's daughter and retired from the service.

Guinee, another able *Freeman's* writer, did his descriptions of public functions at home. He filled in the details from his imagination, and his imaginary scenes were more vivid than reality. He was a most fecund and versatile writer who contributed to many periodicals, who made a big income for a Pressman, and while he himself lived a life of Spartan simplicity he banqueted a friend with embarrassing prodigality.

It would be not flattery but irony to describe John B.

Gallagher, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, as a literary man. I remember on one occasion Lefroy expressed his belief that "Old G.," or "Black Jack," as he was indifferently called at the office, had never read a book in his life. I suggested that he must have got through "Jack the Giant Killer" or "Robinson Crusoe" in the days of his youth, but Lefroy would make no exception.

It was Gallagher who revised the reporters' copy on the way to the printing office and mercilessly mutilated the manuscript. Often, I remember, I wrote the first pages and the last large and wide and the intermediate pages small and close, in the vain hope of evading his inexorable blue pencil. Usually he compelled the unhappy reporter to mutilate his own offspring.

"How much have you there?"

"About a column and a half, sir."

"Cut it down to a short half."

There was no appeal from the decree.

Gallagher had one curious delusion. He fancied that inverted commas were a protection against a libel action, and stranger still an excuse for any eccentricities of style. One evening I read for him in his dingy throne-room the customary trite newspaper description of some performance at the theatre which I had witnessed. Someone, I wrote, was "*exquisitely*" amusing.

"Old G." cocked his head critically on one side. "I don't like that word exquisitely," he said.

"All right, sir," I answered, "I'll strike it out."

"No, no, it's a good word enough, but it's a little unusual there. Tell you what, we'll quote it."

"Quote it from what?" I asked in amazement.

"Oh, that does not matter, just simply quote it."

Next morning the *Freeman's Journal* duly reported that the performance was "exquisitely" amusing.

Yet Gallagher, with all his eccentricities, was shrewd and kindly, and admirably suited for his post. No man could more successfully gauge the current and trend of public opinion; no man could more successfully engineer a boom, commercial or political. He had the keenest and most

discriminating scent for interesting news, and an almost infallible instinct for detecting and rejecting a libel.

For Gallagher the *Freeman's Journal*, the "Popular Instructor" as it was sometimes nicknamed, was a kind of god at whose altar he ministered, whose popularity it was his duty to preserve unimpaired. Himself a Whig of the old school, he never allowed his personal views to influence the conduct of the paper.

When Parnell had established his position in the country and the *Freeman* at last reluctantly supported his forward movement, an old Whig friend condoled with Gallagher on the changed policy of the paper.

"Yes, yes," Gallagher aquiesced dismally, "the country is going to the devil, but the *Freeman* is bound to go with the country."

One other colleague claims honourable mention.

When I first joined the *Freeman's Journal* that word "colleague" would have been incredible presumption applied to Theophilus McWeeney, the chief reporter. As well might the junior clerk of the Treasury claim the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a chum. Never in my life did I cringe and tremble before any man as I cringed and trembled before him during my novitiate. Yet he was one of the best-hearted of men, rough and tough exteriorly as the husk of a cocoanut, but full of the milk of human kindness. I tried to introduce him in manner as he lived into my story "White Magic," and am glad to remember he recognized and approved of the portrait. He may be fairly described as a "champion reporter." Of him it was said in Press circles that if he were thrown down a chimney when a meeting was half over he would contrive to get a full report of it before it rose. To literary style he had no claim, he gave facts in plain, bald narrative. Curiously enough for a Pressman of many years' standing, he loved rather to talk than to write; but as a mere reporter he was one of the most efficient I ever knew, keen as Sherlock Holmes, or shall I say Mr. Dupin, in ferreting out a secret piece of news, invaluable at a big public meeting in producing a cartload of copy.

Yet it is not as a reporter but as a humorist that I remem-

ber him best. There was, indeed, never a trace of humour in his descriptive writings, however provocative the subject. No man who wrote so poorly ever talked so well. It would seem that in him the mere feel of the pen or pencil paralysed the humour and imagination that revelled in the living word. His charm as a story-teller was supplemented by a marvellous gift as a mimic. By a twist of his face, a motion of his head he brought the man mimicked before his audience. Mr. Grossmith was the only other man I ever knew who possessed this singular gift of suggestion.

McWeeney never smiled at his own stories, the wilder the farce the graver grew that hatchet face with its high forehead and its tuft of pointed beard.

We were thorough Bohemians in those good days that are gone, irresponsible as boys, "who think there is no more behind than such a day to-morrow as to-day and to be boys eternal."

Our daily life abounded in practical jokes and horse-play, but of the good-natured variety that give delight and hurt not. I have been writing assiduously when a couple of newspapers have been set on fire beside me, and have with difficulty rescued my precious copy from the flames. I have been beguiled by a judicious conspiracy of false testimony to search at midnight for some non-existent fire in a remote quarter of the town. But these things belong to the time when I had been made free of the craft, and that was many months after my first shy appearance in the reporters' room.

It was a hard struggle at first, for "the Chief," adopting the heroic method, flung me to sink or swim into a law court or public meeting, where I floundered about wildly, all the time out of my depth. When I had practised shorthand I had been read to by kindly friends, who waited for me at the end of each sentence. Now inconsiderate speakers left me whole paragraphs behind, while my labouring pencil toiled after them in vain. My notes were in an inexplicable tangle, illegible to my bewildered eyes as Egyptian hieroglyphics. Only very gradually I learned the art of following the sense of the speaker while my pencil followed his

words. I learned too in those days that slow reading is faster than fast speaking, and that quiet conversation is faster than either.

As I have said, I never grew a proficient shorthand writer. There were those amongst my colleagues who could easily keep pace with the most rapid speaker, as a dog keeps pace with a car, trotting along by the side without any apparent effort, but I had always to call on my memory to fill up the gaps left by my pencil.

Two red-letter days stand out in my confused recollection of my protracted struggle to obtain an assured foothold on the Press—the day my writing first took on the dignity of the type, and the day that my fingers first touched coin of my own earning.

CHAPTER IV

WORK AND PLAY

A life of variety—In the middle of things—Utilizing a Lord-Lieutenant—Personating a Lord-Lieutenant—Boycotting a Lord-Lieutenant—Intimidating a Synod—An eloquent assembly—"The Colonel's corner"—An effective retort—A sharp contrast—The hanging of a murderer.

FOR a young fellow sound in mind and limb, with a fair average intellect, there is no life in the world to rival a reporter's. The work is hard,—mind and muscle are often strained to the uttermost, but there is no other life that offers youth so much variety and excitement. The reporter lives in the midst of events, he sees and hears what other folks are anxious to read about, he never knows from day to day where he shall have to go or what he shall behold and record. In the routine of his day's work he meets the great men of his time, he is eye and ear-witness to the most exciting events, the side-shows of life are all open to him, theatres and social gatherings welcome him. With all deference to Hamlet, reporters, and not the actors, are in truth "the abstract and brief chronicle of the time." The most self-contained celebrities realize that "after death you had better have a bad epitaph than a bad report while you live."

The reporter has seldom to complain of incivility, and he can always retaliate successfully. The principal actors in great events are only too anxious to facilitate the work of publicity. A colleague of mine, Mr. J. B. Hall, on the *Freeman's Journal* used to tell the following story, which I give as nearly as possible in his own words:—

"When Lord Wodehouse was appointed Lord-Lieutenant, there was as usual a natural desire on the part of the newspapers to obtain some information about the 'new man,'

and the procedure of installation at the Castle, and I was requested to pick up all I could about the Viceregal function.

"I discovered that Lord Wodehouse and his suite were to depart that very evening from Kingstown to Holyhead, and as I was then living at Sandycove, I went down to the mailboat, the *Old Connaught*, and addressing my friend, the evergreen Captain Thomas, asked him had the Lord-Lieutenant, his secretary and party arrived?

"Pointing to a little group of gentlemen, he said, 'They are over yonder at the cabin, starboard side; that's the secretary with the white flower in his coat.'

"So I strolled towards the group, the members of which were moving to and fro, and politely accosting the gentleman with the flower, said to him, 'You, I believe, are one of the Viceregal party?'

"'Yes,' he replied, 'are you coming across?'

"I said no, that I was a newspaper reporter, mentioned the name of my paper, and added that I was anxious to obtain some particulars of 'the swearing in of the new man at the Castle that afternoon.'

"'My dear fellow,' he answered pleasantly, 'I am awfully glad I met you, I shall be only too delighted to help; let us sit down.'

"Then and there he dictated to me a really interesting account of the inauguration, with many graphic and unconventional touches. I asked him a few supplemental questions as to what he thought were the general views of the 'new Lord-Lieutenant,' his first experiences of Ireland, and all the rest of it, and in reply he gave me a fund of interesting information.

"When he had finished, I said, 'Well, I am ever so much obliged to you, thank you very much. You, I presume, are his Excellency's secretary?'

"'No, my boy,' said he, with a broad smile, 'I happen to be the "new man" himself, very much at your service; whenever you want any information it is in my power to give, you will always be welcome.'

"For a moment I was dumbfounded, but the contents of my notebook consoled me for my mistake."

The same colleague told how on another occasion the reporters got becalmed in a little yacht near Glengariff, and so missed the Viceroy's (Lord Haughton's) reply to an important address. They had secured a copy of the address before they sailed and, putting their heads together, they fabricated a column of eloquent but vague reply, which they wired to the Dublin papers the moment they touched land and which was accepted without question as the speech of his Excellency.

Only twice in my recollection was a slight offered to Pressmen, and on both occasions the slight was promptly and amply revenged.

The Royal Agricultural Society once upon a time held its show in Londonderry. The " City of Apprentice Boys " was in a tremor of bustle and excitement. The then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Abercorn, went down to Derry for the show. It chanced that a special political significance attended his presence, and there were a host of reporters on the scene, including Press representatives from all the principal newspapers of Great Britain.

The Mayor, who had fairly lost his head at this sudden inflation of his importance, contrived to insult the whole body of reporters at the first public function they attended. They determined in retaliation to boycott the Mayor, the Lord-Lieutenant and the show.

The word Boycott was not known then, but the thing was. We reporters, in a body, politely declined all invitations to deputations, meetings or banquets, so the congratulatory address of the Corporation and the conciliatory response of his Excellency were lost to a curious public.

Then the Viceregal influence was brought to bear on the newspaper proprietors, but they were loyal to their staffs and declined to interfere. The orators, refused the publicity of print, spoke their speeches to each other, and " to party gave up what was meant for mankind," while we reporters took our pleasure at our inn. Amongst those orators who had come to Derry with their speeches in their heads, or in their pockets, there was bitter discontent at the suppression, and the Mayor, who was responsible, was the

target of their reproaches. His slight to the Press, moreover, cost him the knighthood which he had confidently anticipated.

Some time later I participated in a similar interlude of a less tragical character. A very large number of reporters, amongst them myself, were brought daily to the Synod Hall of Christ's Church in the early days of the excited debates on the revision of the Common Prayer Book, which succeeded Irish Church Disestablishment.

Time and again we vainly requested the authorities to provide a screen between our gallery and the antechamber where our notes were transcribed. So great was the draught from one room to the other that occasionally the pages of our "copy" were lifted by the wind and scattered broadcast through the hall.

Day after day promises were given and broken. At last we took the matter into our hands, and quietly retired in a body from the gallery to the chamber behind it. For a few moments it appeared our disappearance was unnoticed. An eloquent military orator, one of the "party of the Colonel's," as it was called, was at the moment delivering an impassioned denunciation of a comma in the Athanasian Creed. Suddenly he stopped short in the middle of a sentence. He had discovered the void in the reporters' gallery.

There was a confused buzz of surprise and consternation; then blank silence.

A few moments afterwards an influential deputation, a bishop, I fancy, I am almost certain a dean and a canon, waited on us and requested us to return to our place, promising everything. But we had lost faith in ecclesiastical protestations. We felt ourselves masters of the situation, and we refused to budge an inch until the promises were redeemed. The Synodical deliberations were interrupted for an hour or more till a curtain had been adjusted at the back of the reporters' gallery, so the triumph of the Press militant over the Church dilatory was complete.

While I am on the subject I say that the most exciting, excitable and eloquent assembly I ever attended was the

same Protestant Synod. The Protestant newspapers reported the proceedings in full, their reporters were hard-worked, but the editorial limit for the *Freeman* was a column to a column and a half, so I had ample leisure for the discriminating enjoyment of the debate. The topics to be discussed would not seem provocative of enthusiasm, but I heard hours of genuine eloquence expended over a debate on infant baptism, or the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed.

This thoroughgoing Creed was indeed the chief bone of contention at the Synod, fought over and pulled to pieces by the High Church and Low Church, by the bishops and laity, as fiercely as the body of Patroclus by the contending Trojans and Greeks. All sorts and conditions of men were included in the Synod. Dukes, earls, archbishops and bishops were confronted by a majority of Low Church laity, who were determined on broadening the Church and excluding the slightest savour of "Popery" from its ritual. There was a curiously large representation of the military element, indeed, one section, known as the "Colonel's Corner," waged unremitting war upon what they regarded as the popish tendencies of their episcopacy. It was here the Athanasian Creed found its fiercest opponents, and here the irreverent riddle was hatched :

"Why is the Athanasian Creed like a tiger ?"

"Because of its damnation claws."

There were many distinguished soldiers in the "Colonel's Corner," and more than one of them was decorated with the Victoria Cross. Amongst them was one fine-looking man, Col. Elliot or Folliot, I forget which, who had lost an arm and got the Cross as compensation, who had a special interest for me. He always spoke briefly and very gently, and as the only way in my power of expressing my admiration, I always reported him verbatim. I have often wondered since what he thought of finding himself fully reported in the National Catholic newspaper, where archbishops and dukes were dismissed with a line.

By general consent, the most powerful debaters on the Synod were the late Trinity College Provost, Jellett, and the

late Lord Justice FitzGibbon. The most eloquent orator and chief champion of the Athanasian Creed was Dr. Alexander, Bishop of Derry, afterwards Primate, a great poet as well as a great preacher, who retired at the age of ninety, or thereabouts. They had a curious method of voting by orders which I could never quite understand, and which led to continual deadlock. As the result of a compromise, it was ordained, if I understand rightly, that the Athanasian Creed should stand in the end of the Prayer Book, but no one was to be obliged to read it, or presumably to believe it unless he so chose. However strange it might seem that the majority should settle by vote the faith of the minority, there was no denying the vigour and eloquence of the debates. One illustration alone I find stranded in my memory, though it is trivial in comparison with hundreds that have escaped :—

The Low Church party had fallen out among themselves, and were engaged in acrimonious controversy when Archbishop Plunkett interposed to compare himself and his episcopal colleagues to Cæsar, who, " standing on a height above the field of conflict, viewed the barbarians destroying each other."

Lord James Butler, leader of the Low Church party, instantly replied :

" His Grace," he said, " perched on an imaginary eminence above the laity of his Church, rejoices in their mutual destruction, but this, at least, we can assure his Grace, that though in his estimation we are no better than barbarians, we have no intention of allowing ourselves to be ' butchered to make a Roman holiday.' "

The reporter is the slave of " the Chief's " notebook as the genie was the slave of Aladdin's wonderful lamp, and the tasks set him are as various and as incongruous. When I arrived in the office at ten o'clock in the morning, in blank ignorance of the day's work before me, I was liable to be marked either for a flower-show in Merrion Square, a sensational law case in the Four Courts, a philanthropic meeting, or the investigation of a murder. Often I have been dispatched at half an hour's notice to a political demon-

stration in the remotest corner of the country, transcribed my notes on the return journey by the flickering light of a smoky oil-lamp in the guard's van of a cattle train, and popped the copy into the printer the moment I arrived in Dublin. With sharp and sudden change and contrast my duties shifted from grave to gay, from serious to serene.

"I want you, Bodkin, to do me the presentation to the Lord Mayor to-day," said "the Chief," scribbling in his marking-book; "afterwards you might pick up a par. of the man who drowned himself in the canal."

The presentation was a splendid performance, attended by the notabilities of Dublin, followed by a luxurious luncheon. As luck happened, I had on that occasion a seat beside the late Professor Haughton, one of the most fascinating of men. Good cheer, pleasant talk and bright speeches sent the minutes flying past at a great rate. Suddenly I remembered my second appointment, looked at my watch, found that a fast car would just get me in time to the *morgue*.

With the bright scene still before my eyes, the gay talk still in my ears, the exhilarating fumes of the champagne still in my brain, I entered the cold, foul-smelling court that is dedicated to the dead who have come to an untimely end.

A hastily selected jury sat stolid in their box until they were invited to view the dead body, when they arose with strange alacrity, as if they found some morose delectation in that grim spectacle. The corpse of a man in his prime lay stretched on a rude bench in the dead-room. He was a big man and comely, in spite of the disfigurement of death. The day before he had gone out with a friend, and returning at night-time had dropped into the canal. His life ended as suddenly as a quenched candle. In the dim, damp court his wretched wife sat, rocking herself slowly to and fro in the stupor of intolerable grief. By her side their children crouched. The inquest began.

The widow of a day was called and gave her evidence in a dull monotone, which a careless ear might have misconstrued as unconcern rather than the numbness of a sudden and crushing grief. The police-sergeant told of the finding

of the body to the accompaniment of the scratching pen of the coroner, and the jury briefly summarized the tragedy in their verdict : " Found drowned."

I returned to the office with the details of those contrasting scenes cheek by jowl in my notebook, and I transcribed them one after the other for the paper. The reporter has no need for sermons on the vanity of life.

I had a still more dismal experience on the sole occasion I witnessed an execution.

Even now, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, I cannot recall that grim scene without something of the sickening sensation of horror which it first inspired.

It was a very sordid and brutal murder, with no redeeming touch of romance to awaken the sympathy of the most gushing sentimentalist. A tramp murdered an old man for the sake of a few pounds and was caught red-handed. That was the whole story, as far as I knew it, when I was dispatched to Sligo to describe the execution.

Let me confess, I was in no way unpleasantly affected by the mission ; it was all in the day's work. Sligo, I thought, was a pleasant town with pleasant people, and the Imperial Hotel with the river running in front of it was a pleasant place to put up at. On the way down I was absorbed in a novel, and murder and execution lay more than half forgotten in the back of my head.

By the time I got to my hotel, however, the remembrance of the gruesome duty of the morrow had slowly worked itself to the surface of my thoughts, but it was not till I was alone in my bedroom that the horror of the business fairly took hold of me.

Suddenly I realized that for the wretched murderer this was the last night on earth, and he knew it. Vivid and more vivid the picture grew of the poor wretch awake through the long night, looking death straight in the eyes. Of him it might be most truly said that in the midst of life he was in death, but it was man, not God, that doomed him. Sickness eases the passage to the grave ; the vigorous vitality of a man in rude health protests against the

outrage of extinction. Gradually keen sympathy grew to delirium. I seemed to be present in the condemned cell, to share the ineffectual agony of the wretch whose last few hours on earth were slipping away so fast.

Then, as now, my reason approved of capital punishment for capital crime as the one deterrent by which would-be murderers are in the least likely to be restrained. But on that night my imagination completely captivated my reason, the terror of the condemned murderer grew so real to me that I would have given my right hand to save that sordid scoundrel from the doom he so richly deserved.

When at last I slept I was tormented by horrible dreams. Twice I awoke in a cold sweat with the rope round my neck and my foot on the drop. With the first glimpse of the grey dawn, remembrance came back to me clear and cruel, the thought that for the first time in my life I was about to see a man die.

The execution was fixed for an early hour. The day dawned bright and fair, a lovely morning in early summer, and the cool, fresh air of the early morning was stimulating as wine. The scaffold on which I stood with some of my colleagues looked out on a wide, beautiful land, of hill and lake, radiant in the slant rays of the newly risen sun.

The beauty of the day enhanced the horror of the deed. Insistent as the beating of my pulse, the thought kept hammering at my heart that in a little time a man like myself, loving life as I loved it, must pass out of the world before my eyes. I was shocked at the callousness of my colleagues, who chatted and laughed together as if no tragedy were impending.

A bell began to toll: then from afar off, very faint at first, but growing more distinct as it approached, was heard the monotonous murmur of prayer. In slow procession there came upon the platform the condemned man and the chaplain walking side by side, the sheriff and the governor of the jail followed close behind, and at a greater distance a shy and shamefaced hangman brought up the rear. My eyes went at once with horrible fascination to the face of the man about to die. He was pale all over, ghastly pale,

cheeks, lips and forehead a uniform colour, not white, but ashen-grey and shiny with moisture when the light touched it. From the grey lips issued a hollow murmur of prayer. He seemed to move and speak mechanically as if stupefied by fear. Slowly they went past, and the doomed man, still moving like one in a dream, was led to the drop, three paces from where I stood. Then for the first time he seemed to wake to consciousness and, like an animal shying at danger, refused to step upon the drop. The hangman coaxed and pushed him on as one would coax a refractory child. For a moment the trembling figure stood black outlined against the glow of the morning, while the hangman busied himself with the nice adjustment of the rope, and drew over the stooped head the cap that shut out for ever the light of heaven and the beauty of earth.

At that moment my heart utterly failed me. With an overwhelming sensation that I myself was about to die, I staggered down the rickety ladder and leant against one of the posts of the scaffold for support. There was a sudden jerk, a shiver ran through the wood and for a single instant, clear against the light, I saw a ghastly figure that struggled in impotent agony, and then swung gently to and fro a dead thing at the end of the straight, taut rope.

I remember no more. When I recovered consciousness I was lying on the floor of the governor's room, to which I had been carried, and, as sight and hearing slowly returned, I saw a number of men around me and heard their half-contemptuous comment on my " softness."

It was a paralysing experience, but I was above all things a reporter, and a reporter is not allowed to feel. Within two hours " a full, true and particular account " of the execution was on the wire to my paper.

CHAPTER V

LONGBOW AND BULL

Two notable colleagues—*Splendide mendax*—A few illustrations—Bamboozling Parnell—"A boil that burst"—A breeder of prize bulls—"So far forgot himself"—"One of three others"—An insult and an apology.

LIES have an interest all their own. Of course, I don't mean wicked lies, which are sins, but the gasconade of narrative, the boasting of men whose imagination runs away with them, and who are as a rule much pleasanter fellows to listen to than the dull prosers who stick closely to fact and never spare you the infliction of a name or date. I read an article some time ago on lies and the way to cure them. The way to cure them was by telling bigger lies to the liar until he retired abashed. In this article, which was published during the bicycle boom, bicycle lies were principally treated of. Now golf lies are all the fashion, and have given rise to the epigram that golfers on the links are "like as they lie," and off the links "lie as they like."

There is a certain sympathy with the liar of the type I have described. Everyone knows the story of the man in the train who passed his card to the magnificent romancer, who had enthralled and astounded the company. On the card was the inscription:

"Heartiest congratulations; I am a bit of a liar myself."

Fishermen also are renowned for their splendid mendacity.

"How comes it," asked an inexperienced novice, "that the fish in the river a mile off are so much better than the fish in this river?"

His guide enlightened him: "Faix, your honour, it is not that there are bigger fish in the river, but there are bigger liars on the banks."

But all the liars to whom I have heretofore alluded were

specialists, restricted each to a single department of the science. It was my good fortune in my Press experience to know a brilliant, universal liar whose imagination knew no bounds. He was ready to discourse on all subjects with the same fluent mendacity. An hour's talk with him was a liberal education. Let me say at once he was in every way a delightful companion. Kind-hearted, genial and in all relations between man and man the soul of honour. But in the matter of narrative, above all personal narrative, Baron Munchausen was prosaic by comparison. Wild horses won't drag from me the faintest indication of his name or identity beyond the statement that many years ago he was a well-known and popular figure in Dublin.

As I said, he was a general practitioner in romance, but it was in the romance of war he specially excelled. I remember on one occasion happening to be with him at Rigby's famous gun-shop. He picked up a revolver and examined it with the eye of a connoisseur.

" This is foreign make ? " he said.

" No," said Mr. Rigby, " it is one of our own."

" Yes, yes," said our friend, " I should have known that at once. In fact, I bought a pair of them during the Turko-Russian war. One of them I kept for myself, the other I gave to my friend, Osman Pasha. I remember he was struck down on the field and dropped the revolver. I bestrode his body, picked up his weapon and killed the twelve Russians who attacked him with twelve shots from the two revolvers; a first-class weapon. I congratulate you, Mr. Rigby. Osman was very much obliged, and gave me a present of a cigar-case as a memento of the little incident."

" Do you happen to have it about you ? " I asked.

" Certainly," he answered, and drew out a little shilling plaited straw cigar-case, with a piece of soiled paper pasted on it. Inscribed on the paper in his own handwriting were the words, " From Osman Pasha to —— as a memento of gratitude for saving his life."

" But," I ventured to object, " that is in English, and I was under the impression that Osman Pasha was a Turk."

" Some people's ignorance is astounding," he said. " Of

course Osman Pasha was a Turk, but I thought every one knew he was educated at Stonyhurst."

After that I never ventured to cross-examine my friend.

On another occasion I happened to notice suspended crossways in his room an old "property" sword from some theatre, with a huge notch on the blade.

"Do you see that notch?" he asked; a blind man might have seen it. "There is a curious little incident connected with that. As I was riding at the head of my regiment of light cavalry, we were attacked by a superior force of Russian Cossacks. Their leader, a man of gigantic size, at least seven feet high, struck at me with that sword. I warded off the blow with my revolver barrel, and notched the blade, as you see; then I shot him through the head. A year afterwards I was passing over the battlefield and found the skeleton still grasping the sword. I picked it up as a memento of that little incident."

A mutual friend, one of the kindliest and gentlest of men, accidentally stumbled against our hero and made instant apology.

"You were right to apologize. A regrettable accident once occurred by the refusal of a man under similar circumstances to apologize. I was walking on the Rialto at Venice when a man stumbled against me. With the utmost courtesy I requested him to be more careful. On the second turning he again stumbled against me. I cautioned him to be more careful, and warned that the consequence might be unpleasant. He laughed at my warning and stumbled against me, deliberately, a third time. I drew the blade from my sword-cane and cut off his left leg."

"My dear sir," said the astounded gentleman, to whom the narrative was addressed, "I think that was most uncalled for."

Perhaps the most astounding illustration of his prolific imagination is one that has already appeared in print, and created a startling sensation at the time. It was in the early days of the Land League in Ireland. Chancing to meet Mr. Parnell at a late hour of the night in Dublin, our friend drew him mysteriously apart, told him he had been

dining that night in the Castle and had heard the Attorney-General, who was slightly " overtaken with drink," declare that the warrant was out for Mr. Parnell's arrest.

The story was told with such precision that Mr. Parnell accepted it as a fact. " I should be glad," he said, " to get out to Avondale to settle some papers before my arrest."

" I will be able," replied the other, " to procure a coach and four within an hour's time."

" To whom am I indebted ? " asked Mr. Parnell.

" My name is Finnegan," was the reply. His name was no more Finnegan than Nebuchadnezzar.

" Before starting," Mr. Parnell suggested, " I must call at the *Freeman's Journal* office to see the editor for a moment." It chanced our hero at the time was, like myself, a member of the literary staff of the *Freeman's Journal*, but he made no objection to the suggestion, and accompanied Parnell to the sanctum of the editor, to whom he was introduced as " Mr. Finnegan."

The editor was naturally amazed at the sudden change of name on the part of his subordinate. " Mr. Finnegan," quite unabashed, confessed that his name was not Finnegan, but maintained the rest of his story was true.

" When I heard the news," he added, " I went out to Dollymount, where I had a hundred men thoroughly drilled and armed with Winchester rifles. I gave them the hard word to come in at once in case a rescue should be required. Passing Ballybrough Bridge, I came on two constables who called on me to stop. I refused. One of them fired, and the bullet grazed my side. I turned in my saddle and shot the fellow dead with my revolver."

In confirmation of his story he undressed himself and exhibited a red mark on his left side which, to the uninitiated, might seem the graze of a bullet. But the old pensioner, who was the night porter of the establishment, was called in as an expert to inspect the wound, and his verdict discredited the entire story.

" Bullet wound ? " said he. " Bullet wound, indeed ! it is a boil that burst."

Mr. Parnell did not return to his residence in a coach

and four that night, and next day the story was published in the evening edition of the paper, in fuller detail than I have given it here, but with names attached, and some satirical comment on the imaginative powers of "the new Munchausen."

In the afternoon I encountered my friend in a very bellicose humour. "I have been puzzling myself all day," he told me, "since I read the libel in the newspaper, as to what course I should adopt, and I have not yet made up my mind whether I should laugh at the whole proceeding as an amusing hoax, or call out Dwyer Grey (the proprietor of the paper) for doubting my word."

It is right to add that his career ended in real adventures more exciting and astounding than the wildest dreams of his vivid imagination, adventures in which he displayed the most superb coolness and courage, and died the death of a hero.

As a contrast to him I have in mind a kindly, good-natured, harum-scarum colleague, the best-hearted of fellows and the best-natured, who was curiously unfitted for the profession he selected. His characteristic blunders are still the subject of good-natured mirth amongst the reporters of Dublin. He could hardly manage a paragraph without a bull in the middle of it.

Samples only, and those, I fear, are not the best, dwell in my memory. An archbishop was sick, and our friend was dispatched from the office to inquire as to his condition. Next day the paragraph appeared:

"Though still attended by Dr. A. and Dr. B., the Archbishop continues to improve."

The doctors were two of the most prominent in Dublin.

On another occasion he declared "a wreck was thrown up on the coast by a receding wave."

A member of the Royal Irish Constabulary murdered his sergeant. The tragedy was thus described by our friend:

"Constable X. was a steady and well-conducted young man, who bore a high character in the force, but on Saturday night he so far forgot himself as to deliberately shoot his superior officer."

Perhaps the gem of the collection was his description of a boating accident. "The deceased," he wrote, "was one of three others who left the harbour in an open boat."

I remember well what a badgering he got in the reporters' room over this unhappy paragraph.

"How many men were there in the boat?" he was asked, and he promptly answered, "Three."

"That could not be," his tormentor explained; "there was the deceased and three others."

"Oh, there were four," answered the author of the paragraph.

"That could not be, either," was the retort; "for the deceased was one of the three others."

The interview terminated in an invitation to fight.

One other illustration and I have done.

Our friend, "C.C." we will call him, was dining with two other Pressmen when the elder of the two, irritated by some caustic chaff of his colleague, retorted sharply:

"I declare you are as big a fool as C.C."

"C.C." pondered this dark saying in his mind during dinner. Afterwards he found an opportunity to demand an explanation.

"When you said that just now," he asked, "did you mean to insult me, or the other chap?"

"The other chap, of course."

"That's all right," was the satisfied reply.

CHAPTER VI

DICK ADAMS

"A fellow of infinite jest"—Comedy in court—His first brief—Salamander Murphy—Irish match-making—A batch of good stories—Red Dan Massy—The King's Double.

TO one other of the colleagues of those old days a tribute is due. All who knew Dick Adams will accord to him the supreme gift of humour, though it is not easy to find illustrations for an after generation; for his humour consisted not so much in the quick retort and the droll story as in the queer twist that he gave to the most prosaic incidents. He spared neither his friends nor himself when a laugh was to be raised.

In the newspaper office he played all sorts of pranks, which, funny as they were in the execution, would be tedious to recall. When he was called to the Bar there was always a crowd round him as he stood with his back to the fire in the Law Library, and men neglected their business to listen to Dick Adams' inimitable comment on men and things. In later days he enjoyed a like popularity in the smoke-room of the National and Liberal Club in London.

Eventually he was made County Court Judge of Limerick, and while he was a most admirable judge in law and fact and most popular with litigant and practitioner, his irresponsible humour converted his court into a veritable theatre of varieties, frequented by all the visitors and pleasure-seekers of the town. He had a supreme contempt for appearances and frequently decided a right-of-way case in the *locus in quo*, sitting on the fence in dispute, smoking the pipe of peace in the centre of the eager disputants.

Only once had I the pleasure of seeing him in court, and as that was a case he decided against me the incident is

naturally devoid of humorous associations, but the following picture by an eyewitness gives some notion of the conduct of his court.

I only saw and heard him once, but that day is marked in my memory with a very white stone. Judge Adams loved to be eccentric. Apparently in the prime of life, of a cheerful and ruddy countenance and with eyes that sparkled with good-natured humour, Judge Adams, who was all things to all Limerick, was very much at home. Truly, he seemed just a jolly visitor come to make everybody happy, and perfectly succeeding.

Surely such an atmosphere of gaiety never pervaded a court before! Did not the very dock put forth blossoms and buds between the spikes! The good "new times" had come at last!

It was understood, of course, that certain little matters were to be adjusted, some re-adjusted. Each process would be slightly unpleasant for somebody; this was to be regretted.

But as it would be a perfectly ravishing experience for everybody else, was there not much reason for rejoicing?

A fishing case was called, poaching for salmon was the offence. Naturally the gentle alibi was the first line of defence.

But owing to an inexcusable want of backbone on the part of a witness the alibi collapsed. Then the harassed gentleman admitted fishing, but for trout only.

"What bait?" asked Judge Adams.

It was a kind only known to the highly initiated, but his Honour knew it well. He remembered on one particular Sunday having captured a ten-pounder with it on the very spot mentioned.

Straightway judge and accused exchanged fishing stories. The court and the case were forgotten. By pleasant paths they wandered on until at last the judge enthusiastically said:

"Ah, Mr. C., you too are a true fisherman, and that very bait is the best bait I've known for—for——"

"Salm—trout! yer honour!" cried the unhappy culprit.

Oh, the twinkle of those wonderful eyes and the shout that shook the court as the curtain descended.

The next case was more interesting. A pretty and prettily dressed young lady was accused of successful stone-throwing.

A deceased relative had presented a local church with a stained-glass memorial window. The young lady disapproved, and choosing midnight's solemn hour and the largest heap of grey flints, providentially placed beside the irritating work of art, wrecked the window.

" You say, Sergeant B., she threw those stones ? " asked Judge Adams.

" Yes, your Honour."

" And hit the window ? " asked the judge incredulously.

" Every time, your Honour," said the sergeant firmly.

" And was not afraid of midnight ghosts ? " further inquired the judge.

" Your Honour," replied the sergeant in a hopeless tone, " she wasn't even afraid of me."

The judge took a long look at the pathetic figure in the dock.

" To keep the peace for life," was the tremendous sentence given in a tremendous voice. " And if she doesn't you're to wire me at once, Sergeant B., and then I shall——" and Judge Adams completed the sentence with a Judge Jeffreys look.

The young lady now fears to brush the dust off a stone or look crooked at a stained-glass window.

Here is an illustration of his humour, more pungent and less playful.

There is, as all lawyers know, a rule of law that while a judge is allowed to have before him the record of the prisoner whom he is trying, all knowledge of previous convictions is jealously withheld from the jury.

A prisoner was tried for larceny before Judge Adams in Limerick. The case was a strong one and the judge charged for a conviction, but the jury gave the prisoner, who was a respectable-looking man, the benefit of the doubt and acquitted him.

Thereupon Dick Adams read out for the astonished jury

a long litany of previous convictions against the prisoner for swindling and robbery of every form and degree.

"Prisoner at the bar," he concluded, "it would be a straining of language to describe your past career as creditable, but this most intelligent jury has been pleased to acquit you of the last crime laid to your charge, and you now leave this court without any additional stain on your character."

Inimitable is Dick Adams' own account of his handling of his first brief in court :

"At the Cork Assizes thirty years ago I was sitting in the Bar room, engaged in discussing with a friend, who like myself had been called to the Bar during the year, that eternal topic of the young barrister—the hopelessness of the professional outlook. Suddenly the door opened, I was summoned by the janitor, and a friendly solicitor placed in my rejoicing hands that most delightful gift 'a first Brief.' It was marked two guineas, accompanied by a cheque for that sum, and thereby retained me to defend an alleged malefactor who was to be tried in the Crown Court that day on a charge of stealing a donkey.

"I easily mastered the brief, which contained the depositions at the petty sessions and a general denial of all guilt, and after lunch my man was put in the dock.

"The prisoner looked rather nervous, but the state of his mind was nothing to his advocate's.

"It was afterwards my fate to defend a great many prisoners and hold some civil briefs, but the original feeling of 'funk' never disappeared. Some actors attain distinction without ever losing the feeling of stage fright, and the same is true of many advocates, who as their case is approached earnestly pray that some trifling incident, such as, say, the judge dropping in a fit, would delay the case until next day.

"The judge before whom my prisoner was arraigned was the late Mr. Justice Lawson, a very pleasant judge if you had a good case, and very unpleasant if you had a bad one. Above all, he was a very trying man to defend a prisoner before, and had no consideration for the feelings

of an unfortunate barrister in a hopeless cause, bound of necessity to try and make the worst appear the better reason.

" I stumbled through the earlier stages without serious difficulties, but with the defence my troubles began. I called a witness to character, who commenced his evidence :

" ' I know the prisoner ; he is a horse-dealer.'

" The judge wrote down the evidence and repeated aloud :

" ' I know the prisoner ; he is a horse-stealer.'

" ' A horse-dealer, my lord,' I nervously interposed.

" ' Oh, I beg your pardon,' said the judge, ' I thought the witness said horse-stealer.'

" My brethren of the Junior Bar roared at the judicial joke, a duty expected from all practitioners by all judges high or low, and as it is commonly, but most untruthfully said, nowhere more strictly exacted than in the County Court of Limerick.

" My witness disposed of, I began to address the court. Nervousness had by this time completely overmastered me, and I no longer quite knew what I was saying. My rhetorical style was, I believe, originally lofty and restrained, but I had long contributed to a great daily paper which still flourishes, and there I had learned to be a little flamboyant.

" In an evil moment I began : ' Gentlemen of the jury, my client's lips are closed, he stands dumb in the dock before you, but if ever the genius of science descends on the chaos of English law——'

" ' Don't mind the genius of science,' said the pitiless judge, ' but go on with your case.'

" The Junior Bar again roared, and I, scarcely knowing whether I was on my head or my heels, delivered my peroration. ' At any rate, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, no one saw my client steal the donkey.'

" When the jury retired I got back to the fire in the Bar room, where I sat down, firmly believing that my legal career had opened, culminated and closed in a single day.

" In my despair there came to me a very brilliant and very good-natured leader of the circuit.

" ' Don't be a fool, Dick,' he said to me ; ' don't mind old

Lawson, he means no harm, it's only his downright way with every man who defends a prisoner. Many a time I've suffered from him.'

" I took the well-meant advice—forgotten, I suppose, by its utterer in half an hour but remembered by me at the end of thirty years. I went back into court just as the jury were coming out of their room. The issue paper was handed down to the Clerk of the Crown. He read it out, I gasped with amazement. ' What ! ' said the judge indignantly. ' Yes, my lord,' said the Clerk of the Crown, ' it's " Not Guilty." '

" As I left the court in utter astonishment an acquaintance on the jury whispered to me :

" ' Mr. Adams, we thought the judge was too much down on you altogether, so we gave your client the benefit of the doubt."

Dick Adams used also to tell with great gusto of the utter overthrow of a case, in which he was engaged in Cork, by a single imprudent answer of a too-friendly witness.

The plaintiff for whom he appeared as counsel was a gentleman known to his familiar friends as " Salamander Murphy." The nickname had a special significance, for Mr. Murphy had been engaged in very many successful actions against insurance companies, and the delicate suggestion was that he " lived on fire."

In this particular case the company resisted his claim for compensation for the burning of his shop, but they had little to go on except general repudiation of the plaintiff.

Dick Adams, as counsel for the plaintiff, examined a witness who rented unfurnished apartments over another shop of plaintiff's. In reply to question of the counsel he stated that he brought his own " valuable furniture " into the rooms and that he was not insured.

" You had perfect confidence in Mr. Murphy ? " asked Dick.

" Perfect."

" And you had no fear of a fire ? "

" None in the world. Salamander is not the man to go

back on a friend. I knew he would give me the hard word if anything was going to happen."

Dick lost his case.

I trust that no apology is needed for a budget of Dick Adams' good stories, for the most part from his own lips.

"The Irish Cupid," he maintained, "has a double existence. In the poets he is a rosy god all smiles and flowers."

> Young Rory O'More courted Kathleen Bawn,
> He was bold as a hawk,—she as soft as the dawn.

The real Irish Cupid is a more business-like deity, and the match of Mary Hayes, whose father has a bawn of fifteen cows, is proceeded by as much negotiation as if she were an American heiress with a few million dollars. The truth is, of course, that the young farmer cannot marry without a fortune, and that the couple of hundred pounds the lady brings is given to his father, who, securing himself a pension, or "liberty," gives up the farm to the young couple, sends a boy to America with some of the money, apprentices another to a trade with more and marries a daughter with the balance.

"The Irishman," Dick Adams declared, "has, above all things, a saving sense of humour; he loves a good story, though it is against himself." Hence the growth of the "Shrove Tuesday Tales," humorous exaggerations of the undoubted truth that Irish rural matches are often matters of arrangement.

Here are a few which have never before appeared in print :—

On a Shrove Tuesday morning a young girl is roused from her sleep by her mother.

"Get up, Mary," said the mother.

"For what, mother?" asked Mary, who was not anxious to rise.

"To get married," said the mother.

"Yerra, to whom, mother?" said Mary, springing out of bed.

"Yerra; what's that to you?" was the indignant answer.

Here is another tale :—

On the Shrove Tuesday eve a young girl bursts in on some of her companions, " Girls, I'm going to be married."

" To whom, Mary ? " queried all her friends together.

" To one of the Dalys at the Cross."

" To which of them ? " was again the unanimous query.

" Well," said the embarrassed Mary, " it was very dark by the fire and I did not notice which of them."

Mike Harrington wooed and won the heart of Ellen Downing. Unhappily, the faithless man cast an eye on Jane Donavan, who was quite as good-looking as Ellen and had a genuine two hundred pounds, while Ellen Downing had only a doubtful one hundred and fifty. So the depraved wretch jilted the poor girl, proposed to and was accepted by Jane Donavan.

On the Shrove Tuesday morning Jane drove with her intended on an outside car to the church to be married, but as she passed Ellen's cottage she saw the poor girl at the door indulging in the feminine luxury of a good cry. She stood at the altar in due course and the priest asked her would she take " this man to be her husband."

" No, Father," she said ; " no, it will never be said of me that I canted Nell Downing out of a husband."

And " with that," as the Irish story-tellers say, she walked out of the church. Mike looked exceedingly foolish, and was soundly rated by the good priest, who had previously known nothing of his conduct. Then Ellen Downing was sent for, a reconciliation was effected and she and Mike were married there and then and lived happily ever afterwards. The kind-hearted Jane next Shrove Tuesday made the best match in the parish.

In some parts of the county of Limerick a strange custom prevails. A bashful young man when he goes a-wooing brings with him a friend who has more power of speech and is known as " the Spaker." " The Bachelor " and " the Spaker " went to dine at the house of an eligible young girl.

She was bright and clever and had a box of novels from a town cousin, so she began to test the literary tastes of her

suitors. " Do you prefer Jane Barlow or Rosa Mulholland ? " she asked. " Have you read ' Knockmagough ' or the poems of Mr. Yates ? "

The bachelor was not a man of letters. The whiskey punch had began to circulate. He whispered to " the Spaker," " Take plenty of that, for I don't think we will be coming here any more."

There is a vast estate in the west of Limerick on which " Absenteeism " is presented in its best form. The landlord, the head of one of the greatest European families, has little or no pecuniary interest in the estate, but it has been managed by a dynasty of land agents—grandfather, father and son—who have ruled it well for the owners and happily for the tenants.

One of the dynasty was approached by a tenant who was four years in arrears.

" Forgive me two years, sir," said the tenant ; " I want to get married and no girl will have me with these arrears."

The agent, who was a wise man and knew that arrears are a millstone to a tenant and very little value to the landlord, forgave them accordingly.

A year or two passed away and the tenant appeared again at the office asking to be relieved of the balance of the arrears, and pleaded that they were still standing in the way of his matrimonial designs.

" Why," said the agent, " you told me if I took off two years you could get married."

" Well, sir, I tried," was the answer, " but the only girl I could get to have me was the smith's daughter, who has only one eye, and if I have full receipt I could get a girl with two eyes, and as good as any in the parish."

The plea was irresistible. The two years were remitted, and the young man married a girl with two eyes of that " unholy blue " which is nowhere so charming as among the green hills and pleasant valleys of west Limerick.

The Irish farmer has, as a rule, little sympathy with a son's captiousness in the matter of matrimony. He holds the view which crabbed age has always pressed upon romantic youth.

Away with your witchcraft of beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you clasp in your arms;
Oh, give me the lass that has acres of charms,
Oh, give me the lass with the well-stockit farms.

"The girl is a decent father's and mother's daughter," urged such a sire on a reluctant son, "and she has a nice bit of land of her own."

"But, father," objected the lad, "she has a lame leg."

"Is it an opera dancer you want, sir?" asked the old gentleman fiercely.

I have often heard Dick Adams protest vigorously against the theory that because a man tells a more or less humorous story he tells it to jeer at his country. "I tell these tales," he used to say, "as 'founded on fact,' not as facts." Love in Ireland, as elsewhere, often presides when what is called the "Torch of Hymen" is lighted. But love smiles, too, on unions that owe their origin to prudence. Happy and pure are homes of Ireland, happier and purer than any others on earth.

In all seriousness, it is a matter of greatest advantage that young people in Ireland do not, as in other days, rush into early and imprudent marriages. Marriages in Ireland are now later than in most other countries.

"So Lizzie Ahern is going to be married," I once said to a man in east Cork.

"It is time for her," he replied, "sure the 'bridhogue' was left at her door every Shrove for the last nine years."

The "bridhogue" is a rag doll left at the door of girls who won't clear out of the way of other maidens by getting married. It is an attention bitterly resented by the males of the family, and often causes broken heads.

"I was driving once," Dick said, "in the county Tipperary when we passed a nice country place.

"'Who lives there?' I asked the driver.

"'A gentleman they call Red Dan Massy,' was the reply.

"'And why,' I asked, 'do they call him Red Dan?'

"'Begorra, I don't know, sir,' said the driver, 'for his hair is black and his name is William.'"

The owner of the house was the gallant General Massy,

whose bravery at the attempt to storm a famous Crimean fort won for him the soubriquet of " Redan Massy."

Great men have their weaknesses. Not a little proud was poor Dick Adams of a very striking resemblance to his late Majesty King Edward VII. He wore his beard trimmed in the same fashion and occasionally frequented the same health resorts. He had many fantastic stories to tell of his adventures and misadventures from being mistaken for his Majesty.

" ' See here, Richard,' said the King to me on one occasion, ' this won't do, you know.'

" ' What won't do, your Majesty ? ' asked I.

" ' Well, it comes to this : you or I must leave Homburg, and I vote we toss up which it is to be. I don't in the least mind them mistaking you for me ; I don't mind the bands playing " God save the King " whenever you appear. But when I cannot show my face out of doors without some seedy-looking chap clapping me on the shoulder and singing out with a strong Cork accent, " Hallo, Dick, how's yourself ? Come and have a drink," it becomes a bit tiresome.'

" So we tossed up," Dick concluded ; " he won, and I left."

CHAPTER VII

FATHER JAMES HEALY

The Irish Sydney Smith—A diner-out of the first water—Tuft-hunted, not tuft-hunter—Outdoor relief—His curate kept a carriage—His retort to Judge Keogh—Hit all round—"You don't cut your friends"—Under the mistletoe or the rose—A kindly act—An eloquent tribute.

BEFORE I pass from my experiences as a reporter I may be allowed to recall two very remarkable men with whom my acquaintance gradually ripened into friendship. Both were Catholic priests, Father James Healy and Father Tom Burke, O.P., one the greatest wit, the other at the same time the most eloquent preacher and the richest humorist of their generation.

Of Father Healy it may be truly said

> A merrier man
> Within the limits of becoming mirth
> None ever spent an hour's talk withal.

For many years he held a unique position in Dublin. He was the Sydney Smith of the Irish metropolis, "a diner-out of the first water." His social charm made him a welcome guest at the table of such men as Gladstone, Salisbury and Disraeli. It was the ambition of every distinguished man who lived in Dublin, or who visited Dublin, to dine in Father Healy's company. In one of Lord Randolph Churchill's letters, preserved in the admirable biography by his son, he writes after a session of unusual stress, that nothing could restore him but "a night spent in Father Healy's company." The festivities of Dublin circled round him. He was overwhelmed with the invitations of the great, while on the other hand an invitation to his own humble "shanty" in Little Bray was the most prized of all social distinctions. A ceremonious Viceregal banquet would be

Photo by Chancellor and Son, Dublin.

REV. FATHER JAMES HEALY
Parish priest of Little Bray.

immediately postponed if it were found that " the Padre " was giving one of his little dinners the same day and had honoured the Viceroy with an invitation.

Those eagerly sought-for dinners consisted of a single joint, sometimes preceded by fish or soup. He had one servant, who when she had cooked the dinner attended at table. The host carved and the guests passed the plates round. On one occasion a noble visitor who had been brought by the Viceroy to dinner, much to the amusement of the other guests, looked round for someone to take his coat.

" Excuse me, my lord," interposed Father Healy, " all my footmen left without notice this morning and I have not had time to replace them ; I will take your coat myself if you will kindly allow me."

" I'll earn sixpence, Father Healy," said Earl Spencer, when the genial Padre was hastening from his own dinner-table to attend a sick call, and his Excellency helped him on with his coat in the hall.

" And I," retorted Father Healy, " will ' take the benefit of the Act.' "

Father Healy was poor. The income of his parish did not exceed £200 a year at the outside, and he used to say good-humouredly he did not know how he would live at all if it were not for the " outdoor relief " he received. His outdoor relief, which took the form of fruit, game and wine, he freely shared with the poorest of his parishioners.

Nor were game from the preserves, fruit from the hot-houses and wines from the cellars of the nobility the only forms which Father Healy's " outdoor relief " assumed. His well-to-do parishioners made liberal contributions to his larder. A fine clutch of young ducks arrived among these gifts, and Father Healy watched their progress from the pond to the table with lively satisfaction. Seeing them sporting in the water, he exclaimed with a whimsical compassion, " Poor innocents, how they enjoy themselves, never thinking that my green peas are growing on the other side of the garden wall ! "

Cardinal McCabe loved to tell the story of his first visit to

Father Healy's parish. His Eminence attended in cope and mitre at the humble church in Little Bray to administer the sacrament of confirmation.

" I hear you have got a grand cathedral here," he said jestingly when Father Healy hurried to receive him at the gate.

" ' Enter, its grandeur overwhelms you not,' " was Father Healy's ready reply, quoting from Byron's description of St. Peter's at Rome.

On another occasion he asked a priest to assist him in some special ceremonial. The priest excused himself, saying he knew little about ceremonies.

" My dear fellow," said Father Healy, " you do not know less than I do."

" I am sure to lose myself," said the priest.

" No one can be lost in my church," retorted Father Healy.

The gifted Father Healy, the chosen friend of the great ones of the world, was of humble origin and was never ashamed of it. His father was a provision merchant in James' Street, and to the end Father Healy retained pleasant recollections of his father's occupation.

One day when driving in a gig with an aristocratic friend their way was blocked by a drove of pigs.

The aristocrat so far forgot himself as to exclaim :

" Damn those swine ! "

Father Healy quietly interposed, " I would rather see them saved."

I remember reading somewhere a story of a Protestant bishop who, on receipt of some complaints of an incumbent of his diocese, wrote privately to a churchwarden in the parish concerning the clergyman in question, to inquire if he preached the true gospel and was correct in his conversation and carriage.

" He preaches the gospel right enough," the reply ran, " but he keeps no carriage."

The reply fits Father Healy. He preached the gospel, but he kept no carriage. He never had a conveyance of his own, and on one occasion driving in a phaeton he encountered a nobleman of his acquaintance.

"Hello, Father Healy," exclaimed his lordship, "do you keep a phaeton?"

"No," replied the priest, with absolute truth, "but I keep a curate that does."

After all, it is no small wonder that Father Healy lives in the mind of the general public chiefly as a sayer of good things, for no man that ever lived said better. He has been compared to Sydney Smith, but the comparison is hardly just—to Father Healy. The wit of the Irishman was not the less brilliant of the two, and he had a quiet, keen humour which was all his own. There never was a stauncher friend: he maintained to the last his friendship with Judge Keogh, even after Judge Keogh became generally obnoxious to the priests and people of Ireland by his ferocious judgment in the Galway election petition. But Father Healy did not spare his friend an occasional sharp touch where the occasion seemed to demand it.

In a quasi-political trial Father Healy was summoned as a witness, and was chaffed by Judge Keogh about the dangers of cross-examination.

"What will you do, Father Healy," said the judge, "if that villain Butt cross-examines you as to your friendship with me?"

"I will do my best," replied Father Healy.

"What will you answer," the judge persisted, "if he asks you 'Is it true that you a good Catholic and an Irishman are a friend of the infamous Judge Keogh?'"

"I will appeal to the court for protection," retorted Father Healy. "I will say, 'My lord, am I bound to incriminate myself?'"

On another occasion the judge met him and stopped him. "Father Healy," said he abruptly, "I have a crow to pluck with you."

"Let it be a turkey, and I will be with you at six p.m.," said Father Healy.

"All right," said the judge, delighted at the chance of Father Healy's company, "but I must have the crow too."

"Then," said Father Healy, "I hope it will be a crow without caws."

Another of Father Healy's special friends was Father Meehan, a distinguished author whose caustic tongue alienated most of his acquaintances. Even Father Healy himself did not always escape, but he gave as good as he got. They travelled together on the Continent, and Father Healy took occasion more than once to give Father Meehan a touch of the caustic he so freely applied to others. On one occasion at an hotel, meeting some friends, and ignoring the fact that Father Meehan was within earshot, he proceeded to describe him to the company.

" Do you see that fellow yonder ? Though we are not on speaking terms we are obliged to travel together because he cannot manage one word of the French and is obliged to come to me to help him out of every difficulty."

The fact that Father Meehan was an admirable linguist gave special sting to the description.

Next day Father Healy received a curt note from Father Meehan intimating that they must part company, and requesting the return of a razor he had lent. Father Healy replied :

" My dear Meehan, I return you the razor. If you should want to commit suicide I should advise you to get it ground first."

Finding, however, that Father Meehan took his pleasantries too seriously, Father Healy wrote : " Life is too short for this kind of folly. Come and dine with me to-morrow." Henceforward their friendship was without a break.

Father Healy wrote no books and made no speeches. There was nothing of the controversialist about him, he " lacked gall to make oppression bitter." " Of manners gentle and affections mild, in wit a man, simplicity a child," it was his mission in life to give delight and hurt not.

In Ireland among the extremists Father Healy was not popular, but no man did more to disarm bigotry and prejudice with which Irishmen were regarded on the other side of the Channel. His witticisms were keen indeed, but always kindly and left no sting behind.

Never posing as a politician, he distributed his good-humoured raps with perfect impartiality to the extremists

of both sides. Meeting a parish priest who had been active in the agrarian agitation, Father Healy asked him how he was getting on at politics.

"Oh, Father Healy," the friend replied, "I am getting too old for politics, I leave all that kind of thing to my curate."

"Quite right," Father Healy retorted, "quite right. It would never suit you at your time of life to lie out at night in a wet ditch for a pot-shot at a landlord. You would get your death from rheumatism."

On the other hand, when Mr. Balfour on one occasion asked him if there was any truth in the statements in the Nationalist papers that he was generally disliked in Ireland, Father Healy promptly replied:

"My dear sir, if the devil were half so well hated my occupation would be gone."

To attempt a selection of his good things is to attempt the impossible. They flowed from him freely and carelessly as the jewels from the lips of the little girl in the fairy tale, and only a few have been picked up and treasured in the memory of his friends and admirers.

Nothing happier can be imagined than his reply to the dyspeptic priest whom he encountered fresh from his sea-water bath, and who, having assured him that he often derived much benefit from drinking a tumblerful of salt water, anxiously inquired:

"Do you think I might venture on a second?"

Father Healy, after grave consideration, solemnly answered:

"I think you might, I don't believe it would be missed."

On another occasion there was a discussion in company regarding an illiterate acquaintance who had suddenly taken to constant attendance in Kildare Street Library. Various opinions were advanced to account for this metamorphosis. One of the company at last suggested that he had heard their friend was about "to bring out a book." Father Healy interposed with a quiet objection:

"I don't think he can, he is too well watched."

A familiar friend introducing Father Healy to his new

library and pointing to the books on the well-filled shelves, exclaimed :

" You see around you my dearest friends ! "

Father Healy took a volume from a shelf and examined it.

" I observe," he said quietly, " that you don't cut your friends."

Not less felicitous was his retort to his friend the Protestant Archbishop, whom he met as he was hurrying on for a train. The Archbishop showed him his watch and assured him that they had abundance of time. They arrived to see the train steaming out of the station.

The Archbishop was much distressed. " I cannot tell how it happened, Father Healy ; it is a valuable presentation watch and I had the utmost faith in it."

" Better have had good works in it," retorted Father Healy.

He had a discussion with a distinguished lady at a garden party at the Viceregal Lodge as to the part favouritism played in the Irish promotions. The lady stoutly maintained that success was the reward of ability and industry.

" Men get on," she said, " by sticking at their business."

Father Healy indicated a lawyer politician who had just risen to a very distinguished position. " How would you say he got on ? " he asked innocently.

" By sticking at his business," the lady stoutly replied.

" You surprise me," said Father Healy; " I always thought he got on by sticking at nothing."

Father Healy could take a joke as well as make one. There was no taint in his nature of that prudery that takes offence where none is intended.

It is told, with what truth I know not, that one Christmas night at a small gathering at the Viceregal Lodge the beautiful Countess Spencer (Spenser's " Faerie Queene," as she was called in Ireland) stood defiantly under a cluster of silver berries and sent a playful challenge to Father Healy. " Now, Padre, now is your chance under the mistletoe."

Like a flash came the smiling reply :

" Oh, no, my lady, we only do that *sub rosa*."

I was walking with Father Healy through Westmorland

Street when a ragged loafer came begging to him. Pointing after him as he slouched away, sixpence richer than he came, Father Healy said to me :

" That's a nice condition for a poor Irish landlord."

" Why in the name of wonder," I demanded, " do you say that fellow is an Irish landlord ? "

" He has the universal and infallible hall-mark."

" And that is ? "

" A rent in a rear."

On another occasion I met Father Healy hurrying along the platform in Westland Row Station. The fish for one of his little dinners had miscarried.

" I am looking for a lost sole," he explained.

" Well," said I, when the situation was made plain to me, " I hope it will be a good sole when you find it."

" If it is not," Father Healy promptly responded, " it will be damned."

I have been often in company with this genial priest, and have been kept in a constant state of delight and amusement during the evening, but when I attempted afterwards to remember the good stories which delighted the company, I found my memory dazzled by his brilliancy as one's eyes are dazzled by too much light, and only remember how much we laughed during the evening and who made the laughter.

Though Father Healy deservedly ranks as one of the brightest and most genial of Irish humorists, though as a sayer of good things he holds his own with Swift, Moore, Curran and O'Connell, yet amongst those who knew him best it is the unostentatious piety and kindly heart, " open as day to melting charity," of the Soggarth Aroon, that are best remembered.

The following is one of the many stories told of his whimsical benevolence. Father Healy had in his parish and under his charge a schoolmistress whom he regarded with special favour. The girl was musical and anxious to cultivate her talent. With this object she resolved to buy a piano on the three years' system, and applied to Father Healy for the necessary certificate of character to be forwarded with her

application. She was much distressed for two long days to receive no reply, and feared she had offended the priest, but on the third day Father Healy himself came to her cottage and behind him came a donkey cart containing a piano.

" It's my own, my dear," he said. " I am getting too old for music, so instead of giving you a character which you don't require, I give you a piano which you do."

His curate, the Rev. Joseph Burke, who knew him well and loved him, pays an eloquent tribute to his illustrious friend.

" The world," he said, " of which he was an ornament, knew him and idolized him, but the few who were acquainted with his other and inner life, his childlike faith and tender piety, revered and blessed him, not for his mental power only, but also and more so, for his hidden goodness. The cheery word, that so often sweetened the gift from his open hand, is still cherished in the hearts of the poor of his parish."

On one occasion, at the late Lord Justice FitzGibbon's table, Lord Randolph Churchill paid a compliment to Father Healy in a style essentially his own.

" You are a dangerous man, Father Healy. It is well for us Protestants that all priests are not like you, Padre."

Lord Randolph was often cynical, and the guests looked grave, not knowing what was to follow.

" How so ? " asked the Padre, quite at his ease.

" Because in that case," replied Lord Randolph, " we would all become Catholics."

From a photograph by Schroeder, Dublin.

REV. FATHER TOM BURKE, O.P.

CHAPTER VIII

FATHER TOM BURKE

A prince of preachers—An unrivalled humorist—Extracts from his letters—His life in Rome—The earliest remembrance of his childhood—Finn Macool and Finnesse—"An ould goose"—His mother-in-law—Mimicking a cardinal—Hoaxing a bishop.

OF Father Tom Burke also it may be truly said that he was above all things a devout Christian priest. But there was no taint of the sour-souled Puritan in him. He was as light-hearted as a child and as full of the innocent enjoyment of life. "How easy it is, Matt," he said to me one day in the garden at Tallagh, "to serve God joyfully in this beautiful world!"

The greatest preacher of his generation he was as fluent in Italian as in English, and his pre-eminence was as fully recognized in Rome as in Ireland. "The Prince of Preachers" was the name conferred on him by the late Pope after hearing him in St. Peter's.

Of stately presence, with a rich, sonorous voice that filled the largest church like articulate and harmonious thunder, he swayed with despotic power the hearts of his congregation. This is no place for sermons, but I cannot refrain from repeating a characteristic passage in a scorching denunciation of the vice of intemperance.

He described the drunkard lying helpless in the gutter.

"A stray dog comes up to him, snuffs at him, wags his tail and walks away contemptuously. The dog can walk, the man can't."

The same evening at dinner a good-humoured parish priest chaffed Father Tom on the distinction between his precept and practice.

"You preached us a great sermon against drink, Father Tom," he said, "but you don't seem to mislike your own tumbler of punch."

"I preached against drunkenness, not against drink," retorted Father Tom; "I have no quarrel with drink in moderation. Tell me," he added abruptly, with a twinkle in his eye, "did you ever see a merry-meeting round a pump?"

At one time I was pressed by Father Burke's sister Bedilia to write his Life, and for this purpose a number of his letters were put into my hands. The work was anticipated by the late Mr. Fitzpatrick, but the letters were not recalled nor published. I am tempted to give a few extracts here for the edification of those in whose memory Father Tom lives only as an eloquent preacher and an unrivalled humorist. They afford glimpses of the private character and life of the man—humble, affectionate, devout.

The letters are written to his mother and his sisters. They are the simple outpourings of a warm heart with no pretence to grace of style. They were never, of course, intended for the public, but using the discretion given me by his sister I venture to extract a passage here and there which may be published without any indiscreet intrusion on the private life of the great Dominican.

The first of the series, written from Perugia to his sister Mary in Galway, is dated as far back as June, 1848. Matters of private concern and public interest are delightfully mixed up in the letter. He mentions incidentally that his "whole worldly wealth consists of twelve shillings," but he adds, "every day is adding to my size, health and happiness." "Thank God," he writes, "for the splendid flow of health I am enjoying; everything agrees with me. The Italians say my growth is observable after a week. When we visit the nuns they all exclaim: 'Borgio grew a great piece since we saw him last!' The habit which was too long in January had to be lengthened in April." Mingled with private news and inquiries he writes of public affairs: "We are enjoying a profound peace in the ecclesiastical state at present. There were some disturbances at Rome,

but they are passed, and the temporal sceptre is still wielded by our immortal pontiff."

The following extract, written, it is always to be remembered, frankly from a brother to a sister, is the earliest record of success in the pulpit of the greatest Catholic preacher of his generation.

"My sermon on Holy Thursday gave universal satisfaction. The deacon, who possesses talents of the first order, for he is a poet and an orator, made me repeat my discourse before him several times in his room, so I delivered it before the convent much better than I expected." The eloquence of the boy preacher is appropriately rewarded: "On Easter Sunday," he writes, "the Superior sent me a dish of most delicious sweetmeats." "I am nearly six months vested," the letter concludes, "and after six months more I will make the solemn vows of profession. Pray for me that I may make them with fervour and observe them with religious fidelity, that becoming a good son of our holy father St. Dominick, through the protection of my patron the angelic doctor St. Thomas, I may still remain your most loving brother, N. A. T. Burke."

The next letter, written just a year later, in June, 1849, discloses a wonderful change from tranquillity to feverish anxiety in the Eternal City.

"These," he writes, "are fearful times in Rome. Troops are pouring in from all quarters, the enemy are daily drawing their lines nearer, everyone is armed and daily expecting the assault. Much blood will flow before the Holy Father returns. We have not the cholera yet, but being in France they say it will soon visit Italy. I have heard, but I hope it is not true, that they have dug a mine under St. Peter's in order to blow it up if they are driven out. What a crime that would be against the whole Catholic world! When I first entered the great church, I felt as if I were struck dumb with amazement, my soul was exalted as if endeavouring to burst the earthly bonds that held it as I gazed on that vast and wondrous dome."

Mingled with these exciting tidings are eager inquiries for the local gossip of his native town. "In your answer," he

writes, " send me all the news you can think of. I read with eagerness all news of Galway."

Indeed, Galway is constantly in his thoughts and letters. On 15 October, 1853, he writes from Woodchester to his sister Norah, who apparently has just sent him an enormous cake, that he " no longer delights in sweets," and bids her send next time instead of a cake " a box of Arran gurnity or dried ling." " I know that a bit of really well-cured Galway fish would be quite acceptable to my brothers here, and it would besides raise ' the ancient citie of the Tribes ' in their estimation, for what with the miserable specimen of a Galway man they have in me, and what with the hints and insinuations of certain gentlemen from Cork and its neighbourhood, I fear their estimate of our great city is a little below the just standard." So the Galway reputation was redeemed by a box of ling.

Here is an interesting extract from a letter, written from Rome on the last day of the year 1856, to his sister Bridget :

" I fear you will be half vexed with me when I tell you I never spent so happy, so perfectly happy, a Christmas. I went to St. Peter's at one o'clock on Christmas night and I heard matins and High Mass, which began at one and ended at five. Oh, if you only saw the place lighted up and heard the music ; you know it is unlike the music of any other time of the year. The whole object of the finest choir in the world was to realize Bethlehem to the people's mind. Consequently the matins, lauds and Mass were a succession of the most delightful simple airs, such as shepherds would sing to a little child. Then the choir of angels was also represented : lovely solos, and now and then a burst of song from all together with delightful turns and thrills like the second part of the little Irish melody ' How dear to me the hour.' Oh, I was so happy, and so sorry when it was all over. Then at seven I said my three masses at one of the seven privileged altars of St. Peter's. The first was for Dad, Mama, Mary and B. B., the second for poor Nano and the souls of the faithful, the third was for myself, so you see I was on that blessed morning a good son, a good brother

and a good egoist, and now I am a good trumpeter of my own praise."

In the Lent of 1865 Father Tom Burke sprang into his full fame as a preacher. All Rome went wild about him. The church where he preached was thronged to the doors, the intensity of interest grew at each successive sermon, until the Pope himself declared him to be the greatest of Catholic preachers, and the loud vibration of his fame reached to his own land. This is how that triumphant success is described in a letter to his sister Bedilia, written in the May of that year :

" The preaching is all over for the year. You will be glad to hear that on the whole my Lent in Rome was a success. I did not expect it, as I have seen other and far cleverer men than I am break down and fail lamentably. Besides, my coming after such a man as the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Manning, was an ordeal. But God was good to me, as He always is, and helped me."

But all this is a bit off the line on which these reminiscences are intended to run. I set out to write about Father Tom only as a humorist, one of the greatest I have ever known, and I have been betrayed into a eulogy of the preacher. Father Tom differed essentially from Father Healy, though each was supreme in his own line. Father Healy was a wit, Father Tom was a humorist. The one excelled in flashing repartee, the other in admirable mimicry and inimitable story-telling. Father Healy loved best to perform in a conversational orchestra where he always played first fiddle, Father Burke was essentially a soloist. He monopolized the conversation, but no one ever complained of the monopoly.

There are two classes of humorists. One who sits at the feast of humour with funereal voice and aspect, while all round him the table is in a roar. The other who laughs with the best, fully relishing the good things which he provides. To the latter order Father Tom Burke belonged, and it is on that account all the more difficult to recapture the humour of his stories. They need, for full enjoyment, the touch of the vanished hand, the sound of the voice that is still.

But I am bound to attempt it, though failure be inevitable. My very first recollection of Father Tom is at a dinner-party at my father's house, when the conversation turned on the vagaries of memory and one of the guests, in a somewhat sentimental fashion, asked Father Tom what was the earliest recollection of his childhood.

" I remember," replied Father Tom gravely, " when I was very young, I think I was about six months and four days at the time, I cannot be sure to the day, but I remember I was lying in my cradle sucking my big toe ; it was a habit I had at the time, but I gave it up as I grew older. My mother came in and chirruped to me, but I took no notice of the woman ; then she went and put seven pence in coppers on the chimney-piece and left the room. About ten minutes later the servantmaid came in. She looked at me and I looked at her, but she did not seem a bit afraid of me, for she went over to the chimney-piece and took the seven pence and put them in her pocket. Well, I remember distinctly thinking, as soon as I am able to talk I will tell my mother of that maid."

Father Burke seldom told a story in the first person, generally the imaginary narrator was a Galway peasant whose brogue was admirably mimicked. Here is the version of a quaint old Irish legend which I heard him tell at a big dinner-party :

" A big, enormous giant got wind of the word beyond in Scotland of the great name, Finn, our own giant, was making for himself in this country. The Scotch giant was mad allout at the talk that was going on all around, and nothing in the world would please him but to come over and fight Finn. So over he comes on the Giant's Causeway up in the north, all as one of ourselves would cross a river on stepping-stones, and the water nowhere above his knees.

" When Finn heard of his coming he was a good deal disturbed in his mind, for the Scotch giant was five or six times bigger again than what he himself was.

" ' I'm off for a day,' he said one morning bright and early to his wife.

" ' Ah, then, what would be bringing you out in the wet that way ? ' said his wife.

" ' Well, I heard tell there is a big omadhaun of a Scotch giant coming over to fight me and I'd be afeard I'd hurt the crature, seeing as what he is weak in the head be all accounts.'

" His wife guessed on the mortal minute what was up with him, but she never let on.

" ' Would it plaze you, astore, to frighten him back to Scotland again all the way, and no one the worse of it ? '

" ' Could it be done ? ' sez Finn.

" ' If you'll be led be me,' sez his wife, ' it's aisy to do.'

" When Finn agreed to her schame she dressed him up in the baby's clothes and put him sleeping in the bed for a baby. Then she made two big griddle cakes and set them to bake be the fire, and an iron griddle within in the middle of one of them.

" She had hardly done her work when who comes up the hill but me big bould Scotch giant, and him walking like an earthquake and a big tree in his fist that he pulled up for a walking-stick. When he put his head in at the half-door it darkened all the place.

" ' God save all here,' he sez, for he had learned that much manners anyways since he had come to Ireland.

" ' God save you kindly,' sez Finn's wife, ' and won't you step in, me good man ? '

" ' Is the master of the house within ? ' sez the Scotch giant.

" ' Then he's not,' sez Finn's wife, ' but if you step in and wait for him he won't be very long now.'

" ' I've come over from Scotland to fight him,' sez the other, very determined like.

" ' Faix, an' it's welcome you are,' sez Finn's wife, letting on she was delighted with the news. ' Draw down the child's stool then, and have an air of the fire while you are waiting. Himsel' will be delighted to meet you ; we had word of your comin', and it was only yesterday he was sayin' to me he would be rather baitin' you than aitin' the best dinner that ever was cooked.'

" The Scotch giant wasn't mightily pleased at that, but Finn in the cradle within began laughin' fit to break his sides.

" ' What's that, what's that ? ' sez the Scotch giant, jumping up at the quare sound.

" ' That,' sez Finn's wife, as she med for the cradle, ' sure, that's the baby cryin', and me heart's scalded tryin' to plaze him.'

" ' He's a fine-grown child,' sez the Scotch giant when he seen the big head of Finn stickin' out from under the blankets.

" ' Fine enagh,' sez Finn's wife; ' musha, go long out of that with you, sure it's humbuggin' me you are to call that little grow-badly the like. Sure, Tom Thumb is the name Finn has on the weeshy, pernickerty little cratereen.'

" Bedad, this took a terrible rise out of the Scotch giant, thinkin' to himself what the father must be like at all at all. He jumped up at once from his stool.

" ' I must be goin',' sez he.

" ' An' why ? ' sez she.

" ' I'm in a hurry,' sez he.

" ' Wait till your hurry is over,' sez she.

" ' I can't,' sez he. ' You'll excuse me to your husband, ma'am,' sez he as polite as you plaze.

" ' You'll have a bit and sup,' sez she, ' after your long walk ? '

" ' I haven't the time,' sez he.

"' Sure, you wouldn't bring the curse of the house on you, goin' off that ways; the cake is ready there be the fire, and it's time to feed the child, anyways.'

" With that she took up the two griddle cakes that were bakin' be the fire and gave one of them to Finn in the cradle, who began munchin' it out of face, and the other with the iron griddle in it she gave to the Scotch giant.

" The Scotch giant thought it quare food for a baby, and he was in greater haste than ever to be off before the father would be back.

" In his hurry he took a hard bite at the cake. Then he let a roar out of him that near took the roof off the house, for three of his best teeth cracked off on the griddle.

" ' What's the matter with you ? ' sez Finn's wife, as innocent as you plaze; ' don't you like your cake, me good man? '

" But the Scotch giant never answered her yis, aye or no, but tore out of the house roarin' meelia murder, and back with him hot foot over the Causeway to his own country."

" That," concluded Father Tom triumphantly, " was how Finn bate the big Scotch giant."

" Bravo, Finn ! " shouted an enthusiastic guest.

" It wasn't Finn that won that battle," said the Bishop of Canea, who happened to be present on the occasion, " it was Finnesse."

Father Tom always declared he heard this story just as he told it from a peasant at a cabin fireside in Galway.

Here is another fireside tale :—

" Father Pat," said Darby Fahy, and he took dudeen from his mouth to say it, " was always a good warrant to do a good turn to any poor soul that wanted it, so when he saw ould Bridget Moloney and her heavy basket tryin' to get through the narrow stile together, he held the basket for her till she got through.

" ' Then what have you in the basket, Mrs. Moloney ? ' sez his reverence.

" ' Crubeens, your reverence,' sez Mrs. Moloney.

" ' And what are you goin' to do with the crubeens ? '

" ' Ate them, your reverence, of course.'

" ' Then where did you get the crubeens, Mrs. Moloney ? ' sez his reverence again.

" ' Beyand, in the town beyand, your reverence. I sould a goose and I bought crubeens with the money I got for her.'

" ' Then that was a quare thing to do, Mrs. Moloney,' sez his reverence. ' A goose is better aitin' than crubeens any day.'

" ' Faix, it's easy seen you did not know that goose, your reverence.'

" ' And how long did you know her, Mrs. Moloney ? '

" To tell your reverence no lie I met her for the first time the day I was married, and she was an ould goose then.' "

A familiar topic of the everyday humorist gets a new twist in the following story of Father Tom's :—

" Pat Fahy, me brother, was goin' down the road fair and

aisy to his work when he saw in a field, within a bit from him, a girl milkin' a cow, and an ould cow be the look of her. Pat was in no hurry, so he stopped awhile smokin' his pipe lookin' over the fence. Then all of a suddin a bull comes rampagin' out of another field straight at the colleen.

"Pat roared meelia murder, and the girl looked round for a minute, then, if you'll believe me, she went on milkin' the cow quiet as ever.

"But there was a quarer thing than that happened. When the rampagin' bull was within twenty yards of the girl, he stopped short, let down his tail that he had cocked up, faced right round and ran like a red shank from the field.

"It was no wonder that Pat was surprised and wanted to know the rights of the story, so he crossed into the field and spoke to the girl, who went on milkin' as if nothin' had happened.

"'Did you hear me roarin' at you?' he said.

"'Tisn't deaf I am.'

"'And you seen the bull?'

"'Of course I did, why not?'

"'And weren't you afeard?'

"'Not the laste taste in the world; sure, it was the bull that was afeard.'

"'Then why should the bull be afeard?'

"'I was milkin' his mother-in-law.'"

Here is another favourite story of his:—

"Quare things happen in the country sometimes," said Darby Fahy. "An ould maid was goin' down to the West of Ireland, and she had with her a rale beautiful parrot in a cage. Somehow the cage got open and the parrot flew off with himself into the wilds of Connemara, where the like was never seen before. He lit down on a gate, and within in the field there was an old man diggin' potatoes.

"When the decent man saw the parrot sittin' there all colours of the rainbow, he stuck his spade in the head of a ridge and came over to have a good look at him.

"While the man was starin' as if the eyes would jump out of his head, all of a suddin the parrot calls out:

" ' Pretty Poll, fine day, fine day.'

" With that the man takes off his hat as polite as you plaze.

" ' I humbly beg your honour's pardon,' he said, ' faix, I thought you were some kind of a bird.' "

We are not always grateful to the man who can " gie us to see oursels as others see us." Father Tom was a superlative mimic from whom no one was safe.

The late Cardinal Cullen, one day at a big dinner, good-humouredly taxed the great Dominican with having mimicked a prince of the Church.

" Does your Eminence believe I would be guilty of such a sacrilege ? " expostulated Father Tom.

" I know it," retorted the Cardinal, " and as a penance I order you to get up and repeat the performance here and now."

Father Tom, with many protestations, complied. The imitation was perfect, every little peculiarity of voice and manner was reproduced. The guests shouted with laughter and delight. But in three minutes the Cardinal had had quite enough of it.

" Sit down, sir," he cried testily, " sit down at once ! "

A little later the Cardinal had his revenge. Father Tom, coming up from Queenstown, encountered in the railway carriage a bishop, who had just crossed over from America. They speedily got to be good friends, and on the way up Father Tom obligingly showed him, through the carriage window, all the beauties of Ireland, with which, it may be added, the good bishop was not a little disappointed. Next day the bishop dined with Cardinal Cullen, and expressed his disappointment with Ireland.

" But you have seen nothing of Ireland yet," said the Cardinal.

" I have seen all I wanted to see," retorted the bishop proudly.

" The Lakes of Killarney ? "

" I have seen them."

" The Giant's Causeway ? "

" I have seen it."

" The Rock of Cashel, Croagh Patrick, Glendalough ? "

" I have seen them all."

" But how ? " asked the bewildered Cardinal. " I thought you said you had only just come across ? "

" I arrived in Queenstown yesterday," replied the bishop. " A most agreeable clergyman showed me all those places through the window of the carriage as we travelled up together to Dublin."

A light broke in on Cardinal Cullen. " That's Father Tom Burke's doing," he cried, " as sure as fate." He explained to the bishop he had been made the victim of the famous Dominican. " I will have him to dinner to-morrow," he added, " and you can have it out with him."

A man who was present told me that for the first time in his life he saw Father Tom Burke embarrassed when he was brought face to face with the bishop whom he had humbugged so shamelessly. But his embarrassment lasted only three seconds, and before the dinner was half over he and the bishop were fast friends. When later Father Tom visited America on his successful mission of refuting Froude's attack on the Catholic Church and the Irish people, there was no one from whom he had a warmer welcome than from the victimized prelate.

CHAPTER IX

CALLED TO THE BAR

Dinners in London—The "Temple Forum"—Irreligious Hindoos—An inhospitable host—A startling translation—The law library—On the hazard—The dissipated Four Courts clock—An explosive jest—An audacious robbery—A highwayman's lawsuit.

THROUGH all the hindering work, variety and fascination of the Press I still continued to make my way, slowly but surely, to my ultimate goal—the Bar. I attended law lectures and debating society, passed examinations and ate dinners in Dublin and London. The dinners at one of the London Inns of Court, which in my day were an absolute essential (since abolished) to a call to the Irish Bar, were a costly farce. No word of law was ever mentioned at those dinners; "to talk shop" was considered the worst of bad form by the students. It is strange enough that eating dinners even in Dublin should be insisted on, but that Irish law students should be compelled to eat dinners in London was wholly preposterous. The notion was, I presume, that Irish savages should be mollified by some intercourse with a superior race.

But though the parents who paid the piper protested against the London dinners, they were regarded as a good spree by Irish students. It was my habit, with a few congenial friends, to frequent those quaint public-house debating societies in London, and whatever might be the subject on the notice paper, we turned it on to Ireland. I remember with pride we carried a vote in favour of Home Rule in the "Temple Forum" twenty years before it was carried in the House of Commons.

We were an impecunious race, we Irish students, and the half-crown dinner provided at the Middle Temple was to us a banquet of the gods. The half-pint of wine was a special attraction. A friend who was keeping terms with me laboriously arranged that we should have four Indian students at our table of six. His notion was that, as their religion forbade them the use of wine, we should have as compensation for their company their share and our own. To his intense disgust the mild Hindoos took to their wine as a cat to cream. Afterwards he professed himself shocked at the lack of respect they displayed even for the teaching of " their own confounded false religion."

Only the other day one of the most distinguished of the Irish judges reminded me of a somewhat embarrassing experience that overtook us when we were keeping terms in London. We were dining together at a cheap eating-house kept by an Italian at which we got a plate of meat for a shilling, and I had made some way with my dinner when I noticed that the meat was high. I spoke to my companion, whose experience up to that had been more fortunate than mine, and he went on eating. But a moment later he got a very full-flavoured morsel into his mouth.

Thereupon we held a consultation. Shillings were of consequence to us in those days, so we nervously appealed to the waiter to get us something instead of the uneatable meat. The waiter referred us to the proprietor. The proprietor heard our appeal to the end in grim silence. Then he spoke :

" It often happens," he said, " that people come to my place and call for dinner ; when they have half eaten they send for me and tell me it is bad and make demand to send something else, but I—I send for the police."

In due course I passed my final examination and was called to the Bar. There were fifteen competitors and I was lucky enough to get " placed," missing the second prize by only a few marks. I was even more surprised than pleased by the result, as I had no time to go into training, being engaged in Press work up to the day of the examination.

My transition from the Press to the Bar was a curious

experience. It was at first a transition from excessive industry to absolute idleness. I took apartments in one of the big old-fashioned houses in Henrietta Street, once the residence of Lord Mountjoy, donned my brand-new wig and gown, hung about the Four Courts and waited. I had passed a good examination in the principle of law, but I was in blank ignorance of the practice.

The great Palace of Justice, called the "Four Courts," stands on the banks of the Liffey with a huge dome pushing skywards and a huge central hall under the dome.

There are always more barristers than briefs about the Four Courts. When the legal tyro has put on the wig and gown it is for the solicitors to put something into his brief bag. Meanwhile he stays its stomach with books and newspapers, preserving a decent corpulency, and waits his chance; but then he has a good time on the whole while he is waiting.

The popular picture of the briefless barrister conscious of his own neglected genius, eating his heart out in moody impatience, is all a mistake. As a rule he has a much more modest and accurate estimate of his own powers, and a very wholesome terror of the first brief. So he bides his time good-humouredly, and is lucky enough to have the Four Courts Library to hide in.

The Four Courts law library deserves a word of special description. The English barrister, I understand, keeps to his chambers, and when (if ever) the solicitor arrives with the brief he is interviewed by the barrister's clerk. The Irish barrister has no chambers and no clerk; he camps out in the law library, which is, in fact, the fair or market where barristers are hired.

Business or no business, he daily robes himself in full legal toggery, climbs a flight of stairs to the law library, and takes his place very literally like a cabman on his hazard, waiting for a fare.

Close to the entrance sat a big man with a big voice. I never heard elsewhere a voice of such smoothness and volume. Whether he was specially chosen for this accomplishment I cannot say, or how the competitive examination

was conducted. But certainly it is the one essential accomplishment for his post. When any barrister is wanted by a solicitor for instruction, courts or consultation, this stentor was appealed to.

Forthwith he sent a name thundering through the utmost recesses of the library. The call, pleasantly suggestive of briefs and fees, brought the barrister hurrying to the door.

The library is sacred to barristers : not even solicitors can pass its portals. But now and again ladies flit through this gloomy temple of law, gazing at the crowd of men in strange costume bent over big books or broad papers, with the same kind of timid curiosity that one regards the animals feeding in the Zoo.

Apart from its legal advantages the library is a wonderful place for social and political anecdote and gossip. I trust some of the stories I have presently to tell will not belie its reputation. A pleasant atmosphere of social equality and kindliness pervades the place. The veriest tyro can appeal in his perplexities to the most eminent leader with the perfect certainty of courteous and kindly assistance.

Some men display in the library a power of concentrated attention that is little short of miraculous. Amid the babble of constant conversation, amid the incessant and stentorian shouting of names, those men work as composedly as in their own silent studies, track an intricate line of argument from authority to authority, or draft a complicated deed in which a slip might mean to the client the forfeiture of an estate.

But even to the busiest men there are moments of relaxation in the library, while to the idle men it is all relaxation. There are always in winter-time groups gathered round the fires, and there good stories go the rounds with hit and parry and counter of lively repartee. No one is safe and no one is hurt. A frank comradeship and good-humour that makes offence impossible is the very life of the place. It was a mistake to call the House of Commons the best club in Europe. It is only the second best. The Irish law library is the best : I have been for some time a member of both and ought to know.

It is not, as has been said, the idle men exclusively that

crowd round the library fires. It is a kind of sanctuary for the Bar leaders pursued by rival solicitors. On one occasion the most brilliant of Irish advocates, afterwards the most brilliant of Irish judges, the late Lord Justice FitzGibbon, was idling pleasantly in the midst of a gossiping group, where his laugh was the liveliest and his story the best.

In the courts below half a dozen jury cases were in full swing. A man coming up from the courts was amazed to see the Nisi Prius leader idling at the library fire.

"Halloa, FitzGibbon," he cried, "how is it you are not engaged in any of the cases that are on to-day?"

"My dear fellow," was the calm reply, "I am in all of them, and I like to be impartial."

Only once in my experience or, I believe, in the experience of the oldest inhabitant, has the equanimity of the library been rudely disturbed. There was a junior barrister, son of the late Judge Keogh, who in spite of occasional eccentricities was treated with indulgent consideration by his colleagues. He was clever too, and his sense of humour had a knack of breaking out in startling and unexpected places.

In the centre of the circle of fun and gossip round the library fire, he stood abstractedly tossing a small parcel wrapped in brown paper from his right hand to his left. The motion naturally attracted attention.

"What's that you've got there?" he was casually asked.

"What a marvellous thing is modern science!" was the apparently irrelevant reply.

"What the deuce has modern science to say to it?"

"You see this little parcel," he showed it for a moment; "only think what mighty forces modern science has stored up in this little handful of matter. It is dynamite. If I were to drop this little parcel out of my hand on the hearthstone"—he began tossing it again and fumbled in his catch—"it would blow the library and all that are in it to smithereens."

Thereupon there was a sudden exodus from the library like black ants from the hill when you drive a spade in.

With a wild shout of laughter that quickened their speed he dropped his parcel on the hearth.

Nothing happened!

Returning cautiously the intimidated barristers found a small ink bottle, wrapped in brown paper and quite empty.

In its Central Hall the Four Courts has an institution in its way as remarkable as the library. It is here that the profession and the public meet and mingle. This hall is a huge drum-shaped building; stone-walled and stone-floored, with courts opening from its sides and circular corridors running giddily round the high glass dome which makes one dizzy to look up at from the floor.

It is here the judges parade at the opening of term in full judicial toggery, self-conscious, blazing with scarlet and gold, and to the irreverent suggestive of a circus procession. It is here that the famous leaders of the profession are on view, rushing frantically across from court to court, to address a jury here, to cross-examine a witness there, each with a big brief bag under his arm and a tail of flustered solicitors. It is here, too, the crowds come on great occasions, when some exciting political trial is in progress, to wait for the verdict. I have seen the hall a circular sea of heads: I have heard its walls shaken with exultant cheers.

Round the great circle are arranged marble statues of the leaders who in other days bustled about the hall. Some of these are works of art; others not: the latter are the most interesting. You can see works of art in any good gallery. But there is a statue of the great advocate, Whiteside, in the hall of the Four Courts, of which the like is to be found nowhere else in the world, a statue fearfully and wonderfully made; a tailor's block in white marble.

There used to be a colossal figure of Justice in the centre of the hall. But her scales got broken and the malicious sneered and sniggered. So to "prevent observation" the Benchers had the poor maimed Justice removed to the quiet gardens of the Inns of Court, where nursery-maids and children stroll and play. The Four Courts, they say, got on very well without her.

But the most conspicuous object in the hall in the old

days, and the most interesting, was the clock : a huge clock with a great brazen face that fronted the entrance and misled all comers regarding the time. They have got a new clock there now, a respectable, commonplace, well-conducted clock, wholly devoid of interest or excitement.

But some years ago the Four Courts clock was famous for its eccentricity ; a rollicking, dare-devil clock that went or stopped at its own sweet will, and kept the most irregular hours. At times it went so fast that it ran into the middle of next week before it could be brought up. Then it suffered from reaction and went slow, simply sauntered along, lagging days behind the times.

The Four Courts clock grew to be a synonym in Dublin for loose living. To go like the Four Courts clock was to go to the dogs.

Snarling critics, indeed, declared the clock typical of the place, and one morning the following lines were found chalked under it in huge letters on the wall, by a disappointed suitor, as was supposed, for the authorship was never claimed :—

The Four Courts Hall a clock displays
Of a portentous size,
That Justice and its devious ways
Most fitly typifies.

Of wheels in wheels it has a lot,
And weights that hang below,
It always strikes when it should not,
And stops when it should go.

Its face conveys a pleasing doubt
To lawyers ever dear,
Its hands, like judges, go about
Two circuits in a year.

And finally, to make it show
Analogy most strong,
It's very often very slow,
And almost always wrong.

This unconscionable and incorrigible clock that could not tell the truth, even by accident, made a bad end. Its story might be worked up into a most improving children's book, one of the series of " Nursery Nightmares," with a

blood-curdling moral tacked on as a terrible example to juvenile delinquents.

I am indeed at a loss for a technical word to describe the crime of which the poor easy-going clock was ultimately the victim. It was certainly not *petty* larceny, nor was it highway robbery, nor burglary, nor obtaining goods under false pretences, though it partook of the nature of all these offences. It was a crime *sui generis*, without precedent or parallel, never before accomplished and never likely to be repeated.

It will be no matter for surprise that a clock that turned day into night and night into day, and totally neglected its regular exercise, was constantly in the hands of a clock doctor. It made frequent excursions to the most approved health resorts in the city, all without avail.

One day at noon, when business was at its briskest in the Four Courts, and the hall was thronged with pushing barristers and staring spectators, a huge van with long ladders on it drew up at the main entrance. A crowd of workmen in shirt-sleeves and paper caps shoved and shouldered their way across the hall to the clock. The ladders were set and the clock was slowly lowered, the crowd languidly watching the proceeding, believing the Board of Works was implicated. The workmen staggered across the hall with the huge weight and hoisted it on to the van. With much cracking of whip and sliding of iron-shod hoofs on the slippery pavement the van and its load got into motion, and the famous Four Courts clock disappeared —for ever.

It vanished as quietly and completely as a drop of water that falls into the ocean. Everyone, of course, at first assumed an authorized removal. A week passed and a fortnight, and there was still a huge circular hole in the high wall where the clock had been. At last some careless inquiry was started. Question led to question, and it was finally discovered that no one knew anything of the clock ; no one had directed its removal ; no one had the least knowledge of its ravishers or their whereabouts. Belated inquiry never got upon the track. The clock had dis-

FRANK MCDONOUGH, Q.C.

appeared " like water spilt upon the plain, not to be gathered up again," and to the present hour no light has fallen on the mystery of its disappearance.

It seems a little curious at first sight why law and levity should go so often together. Yet it is so. For all its prim formality there is a good deal of dry humour, conscious or unconscious, about the law. Its very incongruity is amusing. It is a sharp-eyed business man masquerading in a costume of the Middle Ages. For law can never shake itself clear of the grotesque, worn-out trappings of tradition.

The legal profession is the most conservative of the professions, unchanging and unchangeable as the Sphinx (to whom, by the way, it bears an additional resemblance in its talent for unanswerable conundrums). Beneath its portentous wig of bristling horsehair it frowns reprovingly on innovation. The motto of the genuine lawyers has ever been " *Nolimus Mutare.*" If they had their way then, indeed—

> What custom bids in all things we should do,
> The rust of antique time would lie unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly piled,
> For truth to overpeer.

Now and again, indeed, the legislation comes with a broom to sweep the cobwebs out of some corner of the forensic firmament. But the legal spiders are immediately at work, and soon have the corner comfortably and closely curtained again. The law of England has kept " broadening down from precedent to precedent," until at the present day it is spread out into a wide maze of inexplicable contradiction and confusion. It adopts some old rule—absurd, perhaps, when it was first created, certainly inapplicable to our day, and oblivious of ridicule the law follows this rule to every extremity of injustice or absurdity. At best, it seeks to evade its authority by subterfuge or fiction. It never thinks of knocking the tyrant down and walking straight forward over its prostrate body.

The result is confusion to lawyers and disaster to litigants, and to onlookers innocent amusement. A wise old lawyer, Frank McDonagh, Q.C., was looking over my shoulder as I

was engaged in writing my first opinion on some apparently simple question. He ran his pen through the word "clearly." "I am *clearly* of opinion," I began.

"My dear young friend," he said, "never write you are 'clearly' of opinion on any question of law. When you have my years and experience the question you will always have to determine is on which side the doubt predominates."

To the novice, indeed, the study of the law is utter bewilderment. "Case law," as the lawyers call it, is a maze without a clue. In the law library of Dublin there are tens of thousands of volumes in any one of which may lurk the decision governing the matter in hand. With grim humour the law assumes that everyone knows it and punishes the ignorant equally with the guilty.

On this legal treadmill I laboured hopelessly during the first year after my call to the Bar,

> Mastering the lawless science of our law,
> That codeless myriad of precedent,
> That wilderness of single instances.

Yet the study was not wholly without compensation.

In the Law Reports are to be found occasionally jests as good as the best of the much-maligned Joe Miller. It is, for example, gravely recorded—these eyes have read it—in one quaint old volume of Law Reports how two highwaymen fell out over the division of spoils, and one brought a partnership suit in an Equity Court against the other.

The pleadings were all in regular form: "the trading partnership" was fully set out; "the stock in trade," consisting of "masks, horses, swords, pistols, blunderbusses," was regularly scheduled.

"The said partners as aforesaid," so runs the pleading, "to wit the plaintiff and defendant regularly traded at Hounslow Heath, and at divers other highways, heaths and commons of the realm and elsewhere, in purses, watches, snuff-boxes, jewels and other articles of value, and by means of such trading acquired a large number of said purses, watches, snuff-boxes, jewels and other articles of value as aforesaid. But the said defendant refused, and still neglects and refuses to account to the plaintiff for his equal share of

the profits acquired by the said trading, as by the aforesaid partnership expressed and provided."

The parties to this remarkable equity suit were hanged, and their solicitors had their ears clipped off and were clapped into prison ; so the grim joke ended.

The game, indeed, is almost always amusing to the onlookers, if not to the parties, when the law plays blind-man's buff in the courts looking for justice. A law court may be fairly described as a theatre, with the added interest of reality. Therein are enacted " tragedy, comedy, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-pastoral, tragi-cal-historical-historical-pastoral," often blended together, as in real life, in inextricable confusion. Almost invariably we find the newspaper report of a trial, even of a murder trial, punctuated with " laughter."

CHAPTER X

ECHOES OF THE FOUR COURTS

Frank McDonagh, Q.C.—The Nestor of the Bar—His definition of a lie—Lunch in court—A battle with bullrushes—"I never expected your lordship *could*"—The "big Serjeant"—The king of cross-examiners—A ball of worsted saves a life.

A DIVISION of labour is usually observed in court: jokes are provided for the most part by the judges, and laughter by the counsel. But now and again the fun breaks out in unexpected places, and witnesses, and even the parties themselves, provide their contribution to the general amusement. It may, I think, be fairly assumed that if law courts are amusing, Irish law courts have their full share of the fun. I offer no warranty of truth in whole or part for the stories that follow. Of many I was eye- and earwitness, others I have only on hearsay, but I am willing to let them all stand on their own merits. A good story is none the worse for being seven-eighths invention; a dull story is none the better for being all true.

Many a half-forgotten jest and tale linger round the hall and library of the Four Courts, their echoes growing gradually fainter as they pass from tongue to ear and from ear to tongue. I shall here endeavour to catch the dying sounds and fix them, as in a phonograph, for future hearers.

I shall not assume any authority or exercise any discretion in regard to those fugitive anecdotes. I shall not attempt to settle the order of precedent or merit, nor, like a crafty huxter, put all my best berries on top, but will as an honest dealer pour them all out higgledy-piggedly before my readers without any regard to the quality of the fruit or the garden in which it grew.

Frank McDonagh was one of the most prominent amongst

THE PARNELL TRIAL, DUBLIN

the great advocates that graced the Irish Bar when I was called. He was leading counsel for the defence in the state trial in Dublin in which Mr. Parnell and a number of his colleagues, including Mr. Dillon and Mr. Sexton, were, during the height of the Land League agitation, indicted before two judges and a special jury on a charge of conspiracy. Amongst the other counsels engaged for the defence were Mr. Samuel Walker, afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Mr. Peter O'Brien, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, and Mr. Richard Adams, afterwards County Court Judge of Limerick. The leader for the prosecution was Mr. Hugh Law, who also attained the dignity of Lord Chancellor. Judge Fitzgerald, who presided, was promoted to the position of a Law Lord.

The result was a disagreement of the jury, the foreman alone holding out for a conviction. The memory of this prosecution has been blurred by the more famous London "Forgeries Commission," as it is called in Ireland, when Mr. Parnell and his colleagues were put on trial for more than their lives; but the result of the Dublin trial, as is usual in political prosecutions, was firmly to establish the popularity of the Irish leader, his colleagues and his movement.

The rare illustration of the half-forgotten Dublin trial, with portraits of the prominent men engaged, cannot fail to be of interest.

Come first, then, thou wondrous veteran of the Irish Bar, long since passed from amongst us, who held for forty years and upwards a leading position in the profession. Come with courtly gesture, and winning tones, and smile of blandest courtesy. Tell us once again your own elaborate and inimitable definition of a lie.

He was, in truth, the Nestor of the Irish Bar, old and crafty as the Greek diplomat. The scene of the story is his own study. A consultation is being held in an important suit. No man more than he loved a consultation; no man more than he believed in the venerable adage, "there is wisdom in counsel." Never was he greater than when in his own tent he had gathered his legal subordinates round

him, and while the champagne flowed with lavish hospitality he arranged the conduct of the campaign—here planned a dashing incursion into the enemy's territory, there covered a weakness in the lines of the defence.

On the occasion alluded to the plan of battle was arranged, every contingency seen and provided for; one trivial difficulty alone remained.

"Who," asked the commander in his most dulcet tones, "who is prepared to prove the handwriting of the testator?"

"I will do that, sir," said a young managing clerk who, by reason of his previous knowledge of the case, had been admitted to the consultation and was eager to distinguish himself.

"My dear young friend," said the leader, with more than parental kindness, "you will render an inestimable service, a service not easily to be forgotten or lightly requited by the client whom you represent, and the firm who has been fortunate enough to secure your assistance. But stay," he added after a moment's reflection, "if my memory serves me aright you are the young gentleman who, in a previous motion in this case, in which collusion was suggested, made an affidavit that you were totally unacquainted with the testator. Is that so?"

"I am afraid, sir," stammered out the too zealous volunteer, "it is."

"In that case, my dear young friend," rejoined the leader, with unabated suavity, "we will endeavour to dispense with the service you have so kindly offered on this present occasion. Will you," he continued persuasively, "will you allow an old man, older and more experienced than yourself, though I unaffectedly confess your inferior in ability, one who will watch your future career with profoundest interest, to offer you a single word of advice? Never"—this with impressing solemnity befitting a high moral principle—"never swear in a court of justice to anything that can be proved to be false by a document in the possession of your opponent, *for that would be a lie.*"

Never was there a man of suaver manners than our legal Chesterfield. It was a tradition of the Bar that he could

smile insinuatingly at the jury with the back of his head while cross-examining a refractory witness.

This bland courtesy of manner proved, however, on occasion to be but the velvet cushion of the tiger's claw, the silken scabbard of the deadly blade. When swords were out it was seen at once that he was a master of fence. His passes were too rapid and too skilful to be parried; with him it was "One, two and the third in your bosom!"

He was engaged as leader in one of the most celebrated Irish cases of recent times, celebrated alike for colossal sums in dispute and for the singular conduct of the parties concerned. The presiding judge, the late Judge Warren, had the temerity to enter into duel with the leading counsel. Disastrous was his defeat.

"Sir," said the judge on one occasion, irritated by a courteous sarcasm which had requited a discourteous interruption of his own, "sir, if you imagine you assist the cause of your client by disrespectful observations to the Bench, you are much mistaken."

"And, my lord," was the suave rejoinder, "if your lordship imagines that you sustain the dignity of the Bench by frivolous and irrelevant interruption of counsel, your lordship is much mistaken."

In the same trial, and between the same persons, another somewhat amusing incident occurred. Counsel, in his politest manner, suggested an adjournment for luncheon. The judge saw his way at once to a dignified revenge for the stinging sarcasms with which he had been pelted during the trial, "knowing," as the bard hath it, "that the last of humiliations is the cutting short of a foeman's rations."

"Mr. McDonagh," he retorted with frigid dignity, "I never partake of luncheon, and as I am anxious, in the interest of the public and the parties, to bring the trial to a speedy conclusion, I must refuse an adjournment."

"My lord," replied the other in his most dulcet tones, "as I am not fortunate enough to possess the immunity from the cravings of weak human nature which your lordship

enjoys, you will, I trust, allow me to partake of luncheon while the case is in progress."

"Certainly," said the judge, delighted at the prospect of escaping, even for a short time, from his caustic criticism.

But he reckoned without his host.

"My young friend," said the courtly veteran, turning to his junior with winning courtesy, "will continue the examination of this witness with more skill and dexterity than I could possibly pretend to."

Then he calmly beckoned to a body-servant known as the "faithful Rooney," by whom he was constantly attended.

A space was cleared of books and papers on the table in front of the Queen's Counsel's seat. A damask tablecloth was spread, an elaborate luncheon of many courses, with its appropriate accompaniment of glass and silver, was produced from a capacious basket, and the learned counsel proceeded, with all the deliberate appreciation of the accomplished bon-vivant that he was, to the discussion of the repast. Now he daintily picked a chicken wing, now interposed a question, now sipped his champagne, now dallied with a jelly, now suggested an objection, now blandly smiled on the jury, while all the time the unhappy judge fretted and fumed in impotent fury on the Bench.

No provocation could touch the temper of this embodiment of bland courtesy. Yet he maintained (in theory, at least) the ancient traditions of the profession, which are commemorated in the costume of the Bar. The barrister's gown has attached to it a lot of eccentric tags and tassels which are a puzzle to the most experienced wearer. This triangular tab once supported a purse, and that an ink-horn. This long flap that falls over the shoulder was a sword-sheath in the old times, when the Templars were prompter with their weapons than their tongues. They remain as a memorial of their former usefulness, like the rudimentary tail in which the disciples of Darwin find proof that man was originally a monkey.

Irish barristers of old days were famous duellists. Every counsel of eminence, from Curran to O'Connell, had "his man out." The fire-eating Lord Norbury was said to have

"shot his way to the Bench." True to those traditions, this past-master of verbal fence always professed his willingness to exchange the bloodless battle of wit, in which he was supreme, for more deadly encounters.

I remember reporting a celebrated ejectment case tried some years ago at Mullingar, in which a noble lord and the next-of-kin were scrambling for the property of an eccentric, deceased. The next-of-kin had been fortunate enough to secure the services of this silken veteran. At the close of a somewhat protracted argument he was brusquely accused by the leader of the other side, the late Judge Murphy (who had just himself concluded a two days' speech), of frivolous waste of time.

"This," he rejoined, still blandly smiling, though his lips twitched a little at the corners, "this comes well from my learned friend after the wilderness of nonsense through which for the past two days he has compelled us to wander."

An angry retort from his opponent elicited from him a courteous suggestion that he was "prepared to meet his learned friend at any place, at any time and with any weapons he might be pleased to select."

But his opponent suggested "bullrushes," and the genial Baron Dowse, who tried the case, interposed good-humouredly with, "Gentlemen, if you have blown off sufficient steam, perhaps you had better proceed with the evidence," and so the incident passed off without bloodshed after all.

Indeed, our Chesterfield was, justly or unjustly, credited with a preference for such bloodless encounters. He was anxious, whispered malicious gossip, to begin and end his duels in court.

On one occasion this supposed predilection of his was broadly hinted at by an irritated junior. With all his virtues, the veteran was not by any means famous for loyalty to the junior counsel who happened to be engaged with him in a case. When anything went wrong it was his habit to turn to his junior with a gentle but deprecatory smile and shrug, which said as plain as words to court and public, "Behold the sad effects of this young man's haste

and ignorance." This mode of treatment was by no means pleasant, especially when, as was sometimes the case, the fault was the leader's own.

On one occasion the operation had been performed repeatedly with anything but a soothing effect on a junior of consummate ability, who was afterwards raised to the Bench as Lord Morris, and of whom we shall hear again later on. His chance of retaliation came at last. The veteran, as usual blandly defiant, in reply to an attack from the opposing counsel, openly suggested an adjournment to the "Forty Acres" for the satisfactory settlement of their dispute. The suggestion was not adopted.

Turning to his junior, with exquisite self-complacency he exclaimed, "My dear young friend, that is the way to talk to those fellows!"

"Yes," was the reply, and a broad Galway brogue and a long drawl gave force to the remark, "that is the way to *talk* to them, to *talk* to them, d'y' observe."

There is a rather amusing story of how this great legal luminary, this man of all others the most cautious and astute, became the unsuspecting victim of an innocent artifice on the part of the faithful servant by whom he was constantly attended. They had made an incursion together to a fashionable English watering-place in the height of the season. The master, even as an old man, was, not unjustly, vain of his personal appearance: of his silver-white hair and whiskers, his bright blue eyes and complexion, clear as a young girl's. He paraded the pier in the somewhat theatrical costume he was wont to affect, a wide expanse of glossy shirt-front, a narrow blue ribbon knotted at his throat, and a voluminous cloak enveloping his stately form in its graceful folds. The servant, by command, attended his steps at a respectful distance. While the master was delighted at the attention they attracted, the servant was desperately bored by the monotony of the performance. One evening they were alone together, and the master insisted on being told the gossip of the place concerning him. The answer was given hesitatingly and with much apparent reluctance:

SERGEANT ARMSTRONG

"The Big Sergeant."

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" They say, sir, that you are a harmless looney and that I am your keeper."

Thenceforward the attendance of the servant on the pier was dispensed with.

Just one more anecdote, and we bid the ghost of Frank McDonagh a courteous good-bye.

As he was addressing an elaborate and learned argument to a rather dull judge, to whom he was personally obnoxious, he was suddenly and rudely interrupted by the Bench with :

" I must confess, Mr. McDonagh, I do not in the slightest degree comprehend the force or point of your argument."

The brief was at once laid quietly on the table, the gold-rimmed spectacles were gently adjusted, and the reply came low and clear from the smiling lips :

" I never expected that your lordship *could*, but, in order that the point might be made in the Court of Appeal, it was necessary that it should be mentioned before your lordship."

The great McDonagh had a rival, if rivalry it could be called, when every quality of mind and manner were wholly different. Each was master of his weapon. Mr. Serjeant Armstrong, the " Big Serjeant " as he was affectionately called at the Bar, was big in body, manner and mind. He rushed his cases. He went crashing straight through all obstacles to his object, like an elephant through a cane brake. In cross-examination, especially, he was tremendous. This, as every barrister knows, is the most important accomplishment of all ; for one barrister who can cross-examine you will find ten who can speak. It is cross-examination that wins cases. It is cross-examination that brings the certainty of truth or falsehood home to the mind of the jury. The most eloquent speech can only clinch conviction after it is driven home by cross-examination. From the days of the chaste Susanna and the elders even to our own time it has " let daylight " through the most cunning perjurers.

The Big Serjeant was king of cross-examiners. No lie, however skilfully concealed, however cunningly disguised,

could elude him. He tracked the guilty perjurer with the certainty of a sleuth-hound. He did what Hamlet defied the king's spies to do—he "played" upon him. He seemed "to know all his stops." He "sounded him from his lowest note to the top of his compass." He "picked out the heart of his mystery."

He had a method all his own. He stunned a witness by a sudden assault, and before he could, as it were, recover consciousness he plundered him of the truth, however carefully concealed. Over and over again a case was won by a single smashing question, breaking through all defence. It is not easy to give an example, for it is not possible to depict the sudden intellectual spring, the flashing eye, the inexorable voice that wrenched the truth from a reluctant witness.

The following is so poor an illustration of his powers that I doubt if it is worth repeating. The case turned entirely on the evidence of a famous expert in handwriting, whose reputation was of long growth. Now, it happened that many years ago the Serjeant, when he was a young man, happened to be present in court when this same witness was examined, and the judge had declared that he would not hang a cat on the evidence of such an expert. The Big Serjeant rose to cross-examine. For a moment he and the witness stood at gaze. Then sharp and sudden comes the extraordinary question:

"Is that cat alive yet?"

The witness, dumbfounded, hesitated for an answer.

The Serjeant pressed him.

He faltered: "I don't understand the question."

The Serjeant refreshed his memory.

He made a weak attempt at evasion.

The Serjeant shook and pushed him straight on. He lost nerve, grew dizzy and weak under the pelting storm of questions.

To the jury he had the appearance of striving to shirk some shameful disclosure. Then the *coup de grâce* was administered.

"On your oath, sir, did not an eminent judge on one

memorable occasion declare he would not hang a cat on your evidence ? "

The reply sounded to the jury like a confession of guilt, and the witness slunk from the box utterly discredited.

In another case the Big Serjeant made dramatic use of an important document.

The Serjeant's client had had his office burnt down, and three days later he was sued by a solicitor for a large amount of money which, he protested, he had already paid. The plaintiff, a most respectable old gentleman, clearly proved the debt, and the Serjeant rose to cross-examine him.

Without a word he handed the witness a sheet of blue paper with writing and an obliterated stamp on it.

The witness just glanced at the document, then silently handed it back to the Serjeant. Still without a word he took off his spectacles, put them in their case, the case in his pocket, picked up his hat and began to move unobtrusively out of the witness-box.

" What's all this, what's all this ? " queried the bewildered judge.

" Only the gentleman's receipt in full for the amount claimed," said the Serjeant.

The plaintiff, half out of the witness-box, turned to the judge with the air of a man who has been cruelly misled.

" I take my solemn oath, my lord," he said earnestly, " I never would have brought the action, only I was led to believe that the receipt was burned."

The Serjeant's tactics did not always succeed. In the famous Galway Election Petition he had to cross-examine the venerable and learned Archbishop Dr. McHale, described by Dan O'Connell as " the Lion of the fold of Judah." The Serjeant had a little weakness for airing his Latin or Greek when occasion offered.

" Your Grace," he began, " is, I understand, the *fons et origo malorum*," making the *i* in *origo* and the *o* in *malorum* both short.

" Your statement, sir," retorted the learned Archbishop, " is as false as your quantities."

A somewhat similar attack on the distinguished Irish patriot A. M. Sullivan signally failed.

"Tell me, sir," said the Serjeant, opening the assault in a political case, "who is the greatest firebrand in Ireland?"

"Political or legal, Serjeant?" was the bland rejoinder, and the Big Serjeant did not think it necessary to pursue the inquiry farther.

But the most comical instance of his discomfiture occurred, in my own hearing, when he was leading counsel for the defence for a railway company in an action brought by a cattle jobber. The plaintiff, a man of ponderous bulk and deliberate utterance, was being examined in chief.

"You paid your money?" said his counsel.

"I did, your honour."

"And you got in return a small piece of coloured pasteboard?"

"Yis, your honour."

"There was printing on it?"

"There was, your honour."

The Serjeant began to grow impatient. He hated technical formalities and thought he saw a chance to ridicule the plaintiff's case.

The examination continued.

"Did you happen to read the print?"

"I did, your honour."

"Cut it short," the Serjeant broke in impatiently, speaking out of his turn. Then to the witness: "You paid your money and got your ticket, my man, like anybody else?"

The man had his spectacles on examining the ticket. He quietly removed them and put them in his pocket. Then slowly and ponderously he wheeled round his chair amid expectant silence and faced the Serjeant at the opposite side of the court.

"See here, me larned friend," he said in grave rebuke. "See here, me larned friend, no wan was talkin' to you, and there was no occasion for you to put in your gab. When your own time comes you can ax what questions you plaze.

an' I'll answer them quick enough. But you'll be plazed to howld your tongue for the prisent."

He wheeled his chair round again and faced his own counsel.

"Never heed him, your honour," he said encouragingly; "go on as you were going."

For once the Serjeant was completely dumbfounded. Technically the witness was clearly in the right and he was in the wrong. A moment later he joined in the roar of laughter that shook the court and which the laughing judge had no power to rebuke.

The Serjeant's speeches were strong, plain and inornate, but now and again relieved by a gleam of grim humour. He was prosecuting in the Fenian times in a great political case which had Dublin in a ferment and filled the courts and hall with eager crowds. Isaac Butt, the greatest lawyer and advocate of his generation, of whom I shall have something to say presently, delivered a speech of thrilling eloquence for the defence.

The Serjeant rose to reply: "I have listened," he said, "with profound interest to the speech of my learned friend, which I am sure will give delight to the class for which it was intended. Many men are to-day hanging on his words, and many may hereafter hang for them."

A curious and, to my thinking, a striking story of one of the Big Serjeant's first successes may fitly close this inadequate notice of one of the giants of the Irish Bar.

He was engaged to defend a boy of about thirteen accused of the murder of a boy of nine years on what appeared conclusive circumstantial evidence. The two had been seen together early in the day; later the younger boy was found in a bog-hole with his throat cut. When the elder boy was arrested there was blood on his hands and clothes, and he had in his possession a bloodstained penknife and a ball of grey worsted. The mother of the murdered boy swore that she believed that the penknife was her son's. Of the worsted ball she was quite certain, as she had herself made it for her son and given it to him that morning. The accused confessed to his own solicitor that he had taken the ball

and knife from the child, but resolutely denied the murder. He had last seen the deceased, he swore, on the roadside, crying. The Serjeant (he was not Serjeant then, but a briefless junior) thought a defence on those lines too dangerous to be undertaken.

He endeavoured by dexterous cross-examination, successful as far as the knife was concerned, to shake the mother's identification. But in regard to the ball she was positive, and plainly carried with her the conviction of the jury. She could not be mistaken, she swore, she had wound the ball herself from the thread of an old stocking on a pellet of brown paper. Counsel was completely nonplussed, and at the same moment, as if to complete his dismay, his solicitor whispered, "The woman is right. The boy told me he unwound the worsted from the brown paper and threw it away, and rewound the worsted on a bit of cork he picked up on the road."

To his amazement he was bade in a fierce whisper, "Hold your tongue and our client is safe."

The future leader of the Bar saw his chance, and took it. He vigorously resumed his cross-examination concerning the ball. Every question seemed to make certainty more certain, to drive the nails, as it were, into the gallows from which his client was to swing. But every question was artfully framed to rivet attention on the bit of brown paper. Over and over again the witness was brought back to that point, and never wavered in her evidence. At last the crafty counsel thought the situation ripe for his final effort.

"My lord," he said gravely, "there is a crucial test on which I am willing to stake the life of my client. The woman swears that the ball she gave her son was wound on a pellet of brown paper. I ask, my lord, that the ball found on the prisoner shall be unwound in court."

There was, of course, no refusing the request. The ball was produced, and at the counsel's request handed up to the jury box, with the loosened end of the thread hanging down into the court. Counsel began rapidly to wind it on a spill of paper torn from his brief, and the ball whirled and danced in the palm of the foreman, growing small by degrees

and beautifully less. One can fancy the intensity of the excitement in court. When at last a fragment of cork was held up between the finger and thumb of the foreman the verdict of "Not Guilty" was secured, and the reputation of the defending counsel established.

CHAPTER XI

BAR AND BENCH

A white-headed junior—A " play " or a farce—One for the judge—A vision of glory—Isaac Butt—His acknowledged supremacy—" Have a half one ! "—Mistaken for a cardinal—Baron Dowse—" A stake in the country "—To " ride a Greek goat."

POOR Fraser died an old man, but he was a " junior " to the last ; for his brain was fashioned rather in the mould of Yorick than Polonius.

His flashes of merriment were wont to set the court in a roar ; but unhappily for his success at the Bar it was never quite certain to which side the laughter would turn. His was, in truth, an unruly tongue and subject to no restraint. He ridiculed his own side or his opponents, or both, with the most charming impartiality, and as often as not he laughed his client out of court. So it came to pass that " old Fraser," when I first knew him, I won't say how many years ago, was a white-haired junior with the gay spirits of a boy.

On what might be called ornamental occasions he was inimitable. Even at serious functions a speech from him was regarded as essential as the sparkling of the champagne on the dinner-table. Now and again a single word, in his own quaint, dry style, set laughter loose. He would congratulate some ponderous speaker on " his exhaustive—(and exhausting)—oration," or some blunderer on " the charming (if unconscious) humour that lent gaiety to the proceedings."

On one occasion he appeared in court to set aside a plea. His opponent, who spoke with the broadest brogue, waxed eloquent on the subject of the proposed plea.

" It is a good play," he earnestly assured the court,

" an' a regular play ; a play founded on fact and necessary for the proper trial of the action."

Then Fraser's turn came.

" What have you to say to all this ? " queried the judge.

" But one sentence, my lord. ' The play,' as my learned friend is pleased to call it, is a mere farce."

He was quite oblivious of the golden rule (the guinea golden rule) that the function of the counsel, especially of a junior counsel, is to laugh with the judge, not at him. The Bench did not always escape his frolicsome raillery.

A somewhat irritable judge cut him short in the middle of a law argument, thickly interwoven with flowers of fancy, by the impatient exclamation :

" I have done my best, Mr. Fraser, but I fail to understand a single word of your notice of motion."

" Not a single word, my lord ? That is really most lamentable. Will you please permit me, to the extent of my limited ability, to explain it to your lordship ? "

He read the notice over with laborious exactitude.

" Sir,—Take notice that on the 20th day of May, or on the first opportunity afterwards, counsel on behalf of the plaintiff in this action will apply to this honourable court for an order that——" etc.

" Now, my lord, to proceed with my explanation : ' Sir ' —that, my lord, is the mode of monosyllabic address used by the solicitor of the plaintiff to the solicitor for the other side. It is curt, my lord, as the form provides, and indicates that the parties are now at arm's length, but it is not necessarily discourteous, nor precluding the possibility of friendly private relations between the solicitors. ' Take notice '—this, your lordship will observe, is in the nature of a warning ; the object is that the solicitor shall be prepared for the application, and above all that he shall have an opportunity to instruct and fee counsel to resist the motion if he considers it possible or advisable, or otherwise, to appear and consent to the order. ' On the 20th day of May '—a day now past, my lord, and therefore unavailable for the making of this motion—' or the first opportunity afterwards ' —that, my lord, is the present occasion—' counsel on behalf

of the plaintiff '—that is the humble individual who appears before your lordship—' will apply to this honourable court '—that is the learned and courteous judge whom I have the honour to address—' for an order '—that, my lord——"

But the judge could not refrain any longer :

" Go on with your motion," he said, joining in the general laughter, " I have learned my lesson."

He loved to startle the court out of its decorum by some amazingly incongruous retort—burlesque disguised in the profoundest gravity. One day he had been engaged in what, for anyone else, would have been a dry law argument ; but for him it was a series of incongruous and amusing quibbles. He had a contempt for authority. He spun his arguments from his own whimsical brain, turned the cases topsy-turvy, and utterly bewildered the judge.

Human patience, or at least judicial patience, could stand it no longer.

" Will you kindly tell me," the judge broke out, " if you have any authority for your contention ? "

Counsel was at once startled into directness.

" Yes, my lord, the point has been expressly decided by your lordship's court."

" Decided by this court ? Why did you not mention that before ? Was the court constituted then as now ? "

Old Fraser laid his brief on the table, adjusted his spectacles, and looking the bewildered judge solemnly in the face he addressed him in tones of supernatural gravity :

" No, my lord. Since the not distant day when the momentous decision was pronounced, two of your lordship's venerable and venerated predecessors on that seat of justice have departed from this scene of terrestrial sorrow to regions of heavenly glory. There, seated on thrones of gold, and clad in robes of spotless white, they sing everlasting hallelujahs in a never-ending chorus, which blissful society, I trust, it will be long before your lordship is called upon to join."

The man of whom I now come to write was the greatest man the Irish Bar has known since the days of O'Connell.

He stood head and shoulders over the giants of his own generation. I have hesitated whether I should introduce at all into these rambling reminiscences this great figure in whose strange career the pathos overpowers the humour. But in any account of the men whom I have seen and heard, the greatest Irish lawyer, orator and statesman of his day must hold a place.

Of Isaac Butt's supremacy there was never any dispute; in the most emulous of all professions he had no rival.

I was present at the Parnell Commission when Sir Charles Russell dropped a paper which the then Sir Henry James picked up and handed to him.

"Thanks! Where did you find it?" asked Sir Charles.

"Where we all are, Sir Charles—at your feet," was the courtly reply.

The whole Irish Bar, and I may add the whole Irish Bench as well, were at Butt's feet. He was the one man to whom all, however they differed on other things, conceded the supreme praise of genius. Nor was it in this department or that, but in all that he excelled. In a law argument he would convince or confound the judges; in a speech he would capture the most prejudiced jury. In cross-examination he would coax or compel (generally coax) the truth from the most adroit and the most reluctant witness.

His career at the Bar and in Parliament was the most brilliant success or the most absolute failure, according to the point of view from which it is regarded. He leaped at once into position and reputation. In six years he passed from the outer to the inner Bar. As quite a young man he was selected as the Conservative champion in a discussion on Repeal with O'Connell, and even "the Liberator" found in him a foeman worthy of his steel.

It was not a little curious that he himself, as O'Connell then prophesied, should subsequently become the founder and the leader of the movement for Home Rule; the propounder of a new Irish policy; the chief of a new Irish party.

All I have written of the greatest of Irish advocates and politicians sounds remarkably like success, yet ninety-nine

men out of a hundred would pronounce his career an absolute failure. A great barrister, he never attained to the Bench ; a great Parliamentarian, he never attained power. Even his unofficial leadership of the Home Rule party was wrested from him before he died. To the strength of a giant he joined the amiable weaknesses of a child. He was Irish all over, intensely Irish alike in his qualities and his defects. If one could imagine the most genial, thoughtless, reckless of Charles Lever's heroes, gifted with eloquence, statesmanship and genius, one could realize the strange combination of his character. In the practical matters of everyday life he was a baby. He earned money ; he could not help earning it, for solicitors, wise in their generation, forced their briefs and fees on him. But he could not hold it. It slipped from his fingers like a full handful of canary seed in a hundred unnoticed little trickles. I have known him to borrow half a sovereign from a friend and hand it straight over to a cabman for a sixpenny drive.

In appearance and manner also there was this quaint combination of the giant and the child. He had a grand head, massive and leonine and, when I knew him, thickly thatched with hair, silver-white. But he had withal the fresh complexion, the beaming blue eyes and the frank smile of a boy.

It was his habit in court to argue his cases twirling the open blade of his penknife between his finger and thumb. In his address to the jury he had but one gesture, a vigorous sledge-hammer motion, by which he seemed, as it were, to drive his arguments home.

In social life his manner had the charm of perfect simplicity. Whatever he talked about, or with whomever he talked, he was always bright, eager and absolutely free from self-consciousness.

He has been, not inaptly, described as the Irish Gladstone. If one may touch for half a second on politics, it is surely not without significance that the most gifted Irishman and Englishman of their generation were absolutely in accord on the policy that was best for the two countries.

I had frequently reported Butt when on the Press. The

occasion that dwells most clearly in my recollection was a great open-air Home Rule demonstration. The weather was awful. The rain came down in a perpetual, unceasing splash, like water from a hose, and Butt, an old man even then, stood—his white head bare—under the deluge and spoke for an hour to the patient crowd.

The reporters, seated round him in a waggonette, had a terrible time of it. Our notebooks were reduced to pulp, and any attempt at note-taking was impossible, the pencil point went clean through to the cover. A good memory alone enabled me to get a reasonable summary of the speech into the paper. It was good enough, anyway, to please the orator, one of the kindliest and most easily contented of men. Some days afterwards I had the luck to sit beside him at a dinner in a small country town. He said some kind words—he was always saying kind words—about the report, and I ventured to ask him how he escaped with his life from the drenching he received.

"I had two tumblers full of hot whiskey punch at my dinner, and two more after it," he said, "and I awoke next morning as well and hearty as ever I felt in my life."

Later on, at the close of his career, I came to know him at the Bar. He had a fascinating way of treating the merest junior as an equal, and many an amusing story I had from those kindly lips, of which the following serves as a sample. Our talk turned on the modern custom of dram-drinking, in contrast with the good old times when every man took his couple of bottles after dinner and nothing before it.

"I was engaged," said Butt, "in a case of great importance and intricacy in Belfast. To keep my brain in working trim I got up early and set out for a walk through the city in the cool grey of the morning. I had not gone far when I met a linen manufacturer in a large way of business, whom I had always regarded as one of the most staid and respectable of men.

"'Good morning,' he said, 'it is not often we see you in Belfast, Mr. Butt. Out for your constitutional? So am I; let us have it together.'

"'All right,' said I, thinking he meant a walk, but he walked me straight across the street, through the open door of a bar of a public-house, called for two half-glasses of whiskey, and tossed his own allowance down his throat by way of good example, which courtesy compelled me to follow.

"I escaped from him as quickly as I could, but was in turn waylaid by an eminent contractor and shipbuilder and subjected to the same hospitality.

"My next encounter was with a solicitor, and, of course, I could not resist his bland invitation to 'a half one.' A doctor button-holed me next. I was not frightened of him at first. I relied for protection on medical science, but I quickly discovered my mistake.

"'There is a general prejudice,' he broke out irrelevantly, for I was talking about the weather, 'there is a general prejudice shared, I regret to say, by many members of my own profession, against alcoholic stimulant in the early morning. It is a complete mistake, my dear sir; gentle alcoholic stimulant improves the appetite, promotes digestion and, judiciously renewed, fortifies the constitution against the fatigues of the day. Come and have a half one!' So we had it.

"When he left me I began to reflect. The thing was getting serious. I had now had five half ones, and let me tell you, in spite of arithmetic, two half ones are more than one whole one. If this went on I would be drunk before breakfast in the streets of Belfast. I had just come to the desperate conclusion to stoop my head and run, looking neither right nor left, straight back to my hotel, when, with one final glance round, I found salvation.

"Right over the way I saw the then Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, a most venerable man with whom I had the honour of acquaintance. 'Here's my chance,' I said to myself. 'I will get into talk with him. I will lure him to walk in the direction of my hotel. Under his convoy no one will dare to be guilty of the profanity of asking me "to come and have a half one."'

"The plot prospered. He expressed himself pleased to

meet me, and presently in a profound theological discussion we began to walk sedately together in the direction of my hotel.

" Presently he broke off a long Scriptural quotation with a shiver and a muttered exclamation, ' It's a very chill morning.'

" ' Oh, bad luck to you,' I said in my own mind, ' is that what you are at too ! '

" I guessed what was coming, and it came.

" ' In my position,' he said softly, ' I am bound to be very careful to avoid scandal to the weak-kneed brethren, but there is a discreet little place round the corner where you and I will have a quiet half one.'

" I turned and fled as swiftly and as steadily as I was able, and never trusted myself loose in those streets again.

" If I met the Archbishop of Westminster or the Pope of Rome in the streets of Belfast, the first words I'd expect to hear would be, ' Come and have a half one ! ' "

It chanced, when Butt was at his prime, that the Commander of the Forces in Ireland was a Catholic ; an able man, courteous and popular, but a great stickler for ceremonial and decorum.

Now the Commander deemed it his duty at the very earliest date to pay his respects to Cardinal Cullen, prince of the Catholic Church, then resident in Dublin. Early in the afternoon he arrived in Eccles Street, a street of great roomy, old-fashioned houses, where the Cardinal resided, within a few doors of the popular lawyer and politician.

He knocked at the door, which was opened by a somewhat slatternly maidservant.

" Is his Eminence at home ? "

" His Eminence ! I suppose it's the master you mean ? "

" Yes, the master."

" Well, he's in, you see, but he's not up yet."

" Not up yet ? "

" He was very late last night, or morning it was."

" Oh, I see ! "

He had a vision of a venerable old man burning the midnight oil in profound theological studies.

The servant interrupted: "You can wait for him if you want to."

"I won't disturb him?"

"Indeed, and you won't. He was coming down presently, and he never takes any breakfast worth speaking about after a night of it."

As she spoke she turned the handle of a door and ushered the distinguished visitor into a room lined and littered with books. The fume of tobacco-smoke and whiskey punch was heavy in the air; the decanters were still on the corner table flanked by a big box of choice cigars; half a dozen packs of cards were strewn on the ground.

"They were playing up to near four in the morning," the servant confidentially explained. "I think master lost; he mostly always loses. I'll take this to him directly."

Exit with card between her finger-tips.

Almost immediately a burly figure, an old man in red dressing-gown and slippers and very little else, came bustling into the room.

"Delighted to see you!"

The genial face, the kindly voice, the outstretched hand of welcome were wholly irresistible.

The Commander of the Forces shook hands as in a dream. "Sit down, won't you?"—with a sweep the strong hand sent a pile of books sliding from an easy chair on to the floor, and the Commander of the Forces sat down.

Before he had recovered himself he was in the middle of a delightful conversation. He was amazed at the breadth of view and brilliancy of his eccentric entertainer. Intelligence conquered decorum, and he gave himself up to the fascination of this inimitable talker. All kinds of questions—social, military, religious and political—were touched upon with the skill of a master. It specially surprised the Commander to hear Home Rule so earnestly advocated by the Cardinal, whom he had heard was strongly opposed to it.

An hour and a second hour went by. The Commander rose surprised and confused at the length of his visit.

"I fear," he began, "I have trespassed intolerably on your Eminence."

Photo by Chancellor and Son, Dublin.

BARON DOWSE

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"My what?"

"Your Eminence."

"Eminence be hanged!" was the startling rejoinder. "What do you mean by that?" Then the mistake dawned on him suddenly, and he shouted and shook with laughter. "So you have been talking to the Cardinal all this time!" he gasped out at last. "Should he feel flattered, I wonder, or I? Sit down, man, sit down again. You must have your bit of lunch with my real self to make up for it. It will be breakfast for 'his Eminence,' and we will have our talk out on an easier footing."

The Commander of the Forces was wont to declare he never before or afterwards enjoyed a lunch so much. The irresistible charm of Butt's manner quite captured him.

Baron Dowse, as I remember him, was one of the wittiest of men. He and laughter were sworn brothers, always together. At the Bar in the House of Commons and on the Bench he bubbled over with humour, and he left a trail of bright sayings behind him. For years he was acknowledged the leading humorist in the House of Commons, where he sat as Attorney-General in one of Gladstone's administrations.

Those that knew him well declared that humour was born with him, that the law student was as brilliant as the Attorney-General and the judge. When the Baron was keeping his terms in London as a student, he occasionally, like the rest of us, dropped into the "Temple Forum" for a drink and a debate. I found this story there thirty years afterwards, told to me by a hoary-headed patriarch to the accompaniment of two Irish whiskies hot, and brought it home with me to Dublin.

I do not know what was the subject set for the debate on that distant night, when the brilliant young law student from Ireland intervened, but the subject, whatever it was, had come round, as it had a habit of doing in my own day, to an animated discussion of the wrongs of Ireland. A venerable Englishman delivered a superior-person style of speech on the subject, intensely irritating to the quick-

tempered young Irish student, who replied when his chance came with a broadside of ridicule.

Stung by the shouts of laughter that followed each shot, as report follows the flash, a friend of the first orator indignantly rose to what he called "a point of order," and demanded that "the young Milesian should be compelled to respect the grey hairs of the previous speaker."

The retort was instantaneous. "I am as willing as any man, Mr. Speaker," said young Dowse, "to respect grey hairs in their proper place. But I cannot forget that grey hairs grow on the head of a donkey as well as on the head of a man."

As an advocate Dowse was irresistible. He was leading counsel for the defence in a case in which a wealthy employer was sued for damages by an injured employee. After the accident, but before the action, the employer had shown himself exceedingly generous and considerate. He had secured the best surgical assistance for the injured man, and liberally provided for the support of his family.

But when the action was brought he instantly repudiated all responsibility for the injuries.

Counsel for the plaintiff naturally relied on the defendant's previous conduct as a tacit confession that he was responsible. The counsel for the defence was splendidly indignant at the suggestion.

"People of this kind," he said, "would have brought an action for damages against the Good Samaritan in the Gospel, and would have argued that the oil and the wine and the twopence were conclusive evidence of his legal liability."

To recapitulate his after-dinner jokes would be to write a new jest book, before which Joe Miller would pale his ineffectual fires. Unhappily, I have only one or two samples to offer.

There was present in the company at the judge's dinner circuit a very corpulent pseudo-patriotic barrister, a man of ponderous presence and wondrous breadth of beam. He had begun to ventilate some startling theories of his own on the Irish Land Question. The land, he thought,

should be taken by the State from the present owners, landlord or tenant, and divided amongst the professional classes as the most intelligent of the community.

The bluff Baron had listened for some time with good-humoured amusement; at length he burst out:

"Now I really wonder at you to ventilate such doctrines. If it had been a lean, lank, lantern-jawed greyhound of a politician I could understand it. But you, a solid, substantial man with a pair of gold spectacles and a stake in the country!"

"I have no stake in the country, Baron," interrupted the barrister warmly.

"Oh, you have," retorted the Baron without a moment's hesitation; "you have a rump steak, at any rate."

Late in the evening the same barrister, unsubdued by his previous disaster, was vapouring about the active part he was prepared to take in event of an insurrection. He would be found, he said, facing the enemies of his country.

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," exclaimed the Baron. "You have too much sense and too much discretion. You would show the enemy the steak you have in the country."

But it was as a judge I knew him best, and it was as a judge that I had most opportunity of appreciating his humour. There was at the time, practising in the Four Courts, a middle-aged, muddled-headed Queen's Counsel who shall be nameless. The tradition in the law library was that when he was engaged in an intricate case he took a row of Reports at random from a shelf and read them at random in the courts. He was the delight of Baron Dowse.

"That is a very interesting case," the Baron would say, "but has nothing whatever to do with the point before the court."

"Quite so, my lord, quite so," the other would reply, with undisturbed equanimity; "but as an interesting case I thought your lordship would wish to have it on your notes."

On one occasion I was present in court when this same barrister moved to set aside a count in a pleading, a form of motion common enough in those days.

"But on what ground do you move?" asked the Baron.

"The count is unintelligible," growled the advocate.

"Not to me," objected the Baron; "it appears perfectly plain."

"My lord," was the reply, "if your lordship bears with me patiently for ten minutes I confidently undertake to make it as unintelligible to your lordship as it is to myself."

"No man more competent for the task," cried the delighted Baron, and the moon-faced counsel beamed in self-satisfied appreciation of the compliment.

Sometimes, though rarely, the Baron's humour missed the mark. In a time of great political excitement he happened to be going Judge of Assize on the Connaught circuit on which I practised, and in the assize town of Castlebar he found himself baffled more than once in attempts to secure conviction in cases in which the evidence to him appeared to be conclusive.

The counsel for the defence in those cases—Mr. Charles O'Malley, locally known as "the Counsellor"—had a special advantage with the jury of his town. He was a barrister only during circuit, and a farmer during the rest of the year. Living, as he did, in the neighbourhood of the assize town, the men whom he met at the fair and market as brother farmers he met in the court as jurors. They knew the Counsellor to be a straightforward farmer, and they trusted him to be an honest advocate. He had a formula that never failed: "Gentlemen of the jury, you know me and I know you this many a year, and I'm sure you will take my word for the innocence of my client."—They did.

The repetition of this performance told on the temper of the Baron. In one specially clear case he let himself go.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "in this case four perfectly respectable witnesses, whose evidence has not been impeached, and who were admittedly present on the occasion, swore they saw the prisoner at the bar commit the assault. On the other hand, counsel for the defence, who was not there, and who knew nothing about the case until he got his brief and fee in this town, tells you his client is

innocent. It is for you to say which statement you believe."

They believed the Counsellor, of course, and acquitted the prisoner without leaving the box.

"I knew," the Counsellor proudly explained to his colleagues in the Bar room, "that when he questioned my credit I was sure of my verdict."

Baron Dowse took his defeat good-humouredly. When later on he had occasion to speak of the disturbed and dangerous condition of the country, "There appears to me," he said, "to be only one place in all Mayo where a man is absolutely safe, and that's in the dock in Castlebar."

The genial Baron was sometimes a little sharp on the class of magistrates popularly—or unpopularly—known as "the Removables" in the Coercion days in Ireland. On one occasion when a Nationalist Member of Parliament, the famous Dr. Tanner, offended the Removables, an elaborate warrant for his committal for contempt of court, ready drawn for the emergency, was instantly produced, and he was forthwith bundled off to jail.

"They came," remarked the Baron, before whom the case was heard on appeal, "they came with their ammunition ready."

The prosecuting counsel suggested that the Removables drew up the warrant without assistance.

"You might as well," interjected the Baron, "expect them to write a Greek ode."

Next day the words read in the newspapers "ride a Greek goat," and the Baron laughingly declared that the reporters had expressed his views more pointedly than himself.

CHAPTER XII

LAW AND LEVITY

"Mickey" Morris—His way with a jury—"I yield to no man in my ignorance"—Only the waiters—"A little difficulty about that"—Judge Murphy—Innocent boys—The story of the Cock and Bull—"Where's the 'sportavit'?"

LORD MORRIS, affectionately known as "Mickey," who was Chief Justice of Ireland and afterwards Law Lord of England, was pre-eminently Irish and proud of his race, characteristics that are preserved and enhanced in his eldest son and successor, Lord Killanin.

He was an Irishman first and a Unionist a long way afterwards. If he could have been convinced that Home Rule was the best thing for Ireland, he would, I am sure, have become a Home Ruler instantly, without any special regard for the interests of the predominant partner.

A long residence in England had not engendered in him an "electro-plated English accent." While London society scrambled for the pleasure of his company he grew daily more aggressively Irish.

In a former chapter I told of his ready and audacious retort as a junior counsel on his "silken senior." The same readiness, ability and audacity stood the same junior counsel in good stead in his subsequent career. From a leading position at the Bar he leaped clean over the heads of his seniors on to the judicial Bench, and he even contrived to move up on the Bench itself after he got there.

As a jury judge he was unrivalled. He could bring jurors to endorse any view of a case he had himself adopted. On these occasions there was a kind of electric sympathy between the Bench and the jury box, for the judge was a kind of glorified juror himself. In his sound common sense, his unaffected plainness of language, his broad brogue and his rough and racy humour was to be

Photo by Lafayette, Ltd. Dublin.

LORD MORRIS

One time Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Ireland.

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found the secret of his success. Let me cite, by way of illustration, a passage from one of his charges in a case in which I appeared for the unfortunate accused.

A prisoner was being tried by him in the West of Ireland for assault. Two independent witnesses had seen the assault committed and identified the prisoner. The prosecutor's appearance in the box with his head bandaged and his face disfigured gave demonstrative evidence of the injury he had received. Having absolutely no defence, I cross-examined the witness in what may be termed the " common form " in these cases, as to the number of public-houses he had visited, and the amount of drink he had imbibed previous to the beating.

Then the judge came to the charge.

" Gentlemen of the jury," he said in his own rich Doric brogue, " there are two courses, d' y' observe, adopted by counsel in defence of a prisoner. The first is when he has any case at all, when he has any evidence at all in favour of his client, he endeavours to convince the jury, d' y' observe, to convince the jury ; but when he has no case at all, when the evidence is all the one way, and the guilt of his client is as plain, d' y' see, as the nose on his face, and no one except a fool or a juror could be expected to doubt it, counsel endeavours to obfusticate the jury. In this case the counsel does not venture to suggest that the prosecutor beat his own head for the fun of the thing. But it is urged as a defence that at the time he was beaten the prosecutor was drunk. Now, gentlemen, the facts of the case are for you, but you are to take the law from me, and it is my duty to tell you as a matter of law, d' y' observe, as a matter of dry law, that even if a man does go home drunk, his drunkenness does not constitute such an equity against him as would entitle anyone who meets him on his way home to beat him on the head with a blackthorn."

In a sheep-stealing case tried before him the offence was plainly proved, but a number of witnesses were called to depose to the good character of the accused. He summed up in a single sentence :

" In this case, gentlemen, the result of the evidence

appears to be that the sheep were stolen by a man of most excellent character."

"My lord," said counsel in an intricate sanitary case, "I assume that your lordship is fully acquainted with the statutes and the authorities?"

"Assume nothing of the kind, if you please," was the startling reply; "I yield to no man in my ignorance of sanitary law."

His illustration of circumstantial evidence is worth recalling. "Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "I'm afraid you may be puzzled by the long word 'circumstantial' which counsel has used so often, so I'll try to explain to you what it means. If, for example, you saw a man going into a public-house and five minutes later you saw him coming out again wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, that would be circumstantial evidence that he was after having a drink."

Common sense dominated the Court of Common Pleas, where for many years he presided. Chief Baron Pallas, President of the Exchequer Division, was, and is, a profound lawyer, a man of most miraculous memory and erudition. In his court strict law was conscientiously meted out to the litigants. The Queen's Bench was not strong in any special department. The joke in the Four Courts ran, a joke with a spice of truth in it: "If you have the law of the case, go to the Exchequer; if you have the merits, go to the Common Pleas; if you have neither the law nor the merits, try the Queen's Bench."

On one occasion I raised in the Common Pleas Division a highly technical, but unanswerable, point of law as a defence to a motion for judgment in an action to recover the price of goods sold and delivered.

"That's a good law point," said the Chief Justice, "a good Exchequer point, d' y' observe. But why doesn't your client pay the man for the goods?"

"Because he never got them, my lord."

"Now that's a good Common Pleas point, if you can prove it," retorted the judge.

In social life he showed the same unconventional candour.

It was his privilege to take the wife of a Home Rule Viceroy into dinner at the head of a very brilliant and representative company at the Viceregal Lodge, Phœnix Park. She was enthusiastic, as she was inexperienced in Irish politics.

"Chief Justice," she said, when the company were seated, "I suppose we are all Home Rulers here to-night?"

"My lady," he answered in his richest brogue, "the only Home Rulers present are yourself, his Excellency—and the waiters."

He was a Unionist in politics, as has been said, and was prepared in his own humorous fashion to give reasons for the faith that was in him.

"Here we are," I have heard him say, "a very poor country in partnership with a very rich country, with our hand in the till, and nothing will please us but to get away to set up a little *shebeen* of our own."

It is probable that he altered his opinion on this point later on, for no man was more moved by the discovery, by the Financial Relations Commission, that it is the very rich country that has had its hand in the very poor country's till, to the tune of three millions, or thereabouts, a year, and no man argued the poor country's case for restitution with more ability.

One thing is certain, that his Unionism never took the form of abasement before the superior virtue or intelligence of the predominant partner.

The Irish question was the main topic of conversation at a dinner-party at which he was a guest. One noble member of a Unionist Cabinet undertook to instruct the company on the question. He found the solution of the problem in the sacred mission of the superior and enlightened race to enlighten and control poor, ignorant Irish who were incapable of self-government. The Chief Justice, because he had lived his life in Ireland and knew the country and the people as he knew his alphabet, was, of course, quietly ignored.

At length it occurred to the omniscient nobleman who dominated the discussion, that it would be only polite to make at least a pretence of desiring his opinion. He ques-

tioned him with good-humoured condescension, as a grown-up man might put a question to a clever little boy, to flatter the little fellow, without attaching the least importance to his answering.

" Well, Chief Justice," he said, " what do you think of the Irish difficulty ? "

The reply came like a thunder-clap on the self-complacent company.

" It's a case, do you see, my lord, of a very stupid people trying to govern a very clever people against their will, and there will be always a little difficulty about that."

" That's not very complimentary, Chief Justice," retorted the outraged nobleman.

" No, but it's true, my lord, d' y' observe, and that's better than complimentary."

By common consent the Irish question was dropped for the rest of the evening.

As a general rule a judge is spoiled by his promotion. The elevation makes him dizzy. Even the mildest-mannered man is inclined to be a bit peremptory with former colleagues. His tongue tangs authority and his temper is apt to be snappy. There was one striking example in my time, when Mr. James Murphy, Q.C., one of the most pugnacious of counsel, was transformed into the most genial of judges. Those who knew him at the Bar felt it was the same man, strong, clear, resolute, only he had changed his manner from steel to silk. He had been an unequalled prosecutor ; on the Bench the prisoner found him the worst or the best of judges. If the prisoner tried by him was innocent, there was no fear ; if he was guilty, there was no hope. He had a knack of going straight to the truth of a case and carrying the jury after him. The most skilful advocacy could not stop him. Even " the Counsellor," of whom I have already written, was hopeless when this particular judge was on the war-path. Here is an illustration :—

The indictment was for what is known as a " Whiteboy offence," the wrecking of a dwelling-house, and there were about a dozen men in the dock charged with the crime.

The Counsellor put up a witness for the defence who

Photo. Chancellor and Son, Dublin.

MR. JUSTICE JAMES MURPHY

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was shrewdly suspected of being himself one of the party, and who purported to prove that the window-breaking had been done by a party of thoughtless, innocent boys on their way home from school. The witness was, naturally, nervous, but he pulled through tolerably well in his direct evidence under the skilful manipulation of the Counsellor. Before the Crown Prosecutor could open his mouth to cross-examine, the judge interposed.

" Turn round," he said in his deep voice.

The witness turned and nervously faced his comrades in the dock.

" Now, tell me," the judge went on in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone, as if asking a commonplace question, " which of those ' boys ' were with you wrecking the man's house ? "

Before the witness could stop himself, he had identified half a dozen of the prisoners. Five minutes later the Counsellor was on his legs telling the jury that they " knew him and he knew them and that there was not a shadow of evidence against his respectable clients."

The judge and the Counsellor encountered again at the same Assizes. The prisoner, this time, was charged with the attempted night robbery of a " lone, widdy woman." The amazon had proved, however, perfectly competent to take care of herself and her property. Armed with a two-pronged pitchfork she had put the marauder to flight, and had managed, moreover, to get home one shrewd prod as he scuttled through the door. The police found the prisoner next morning under suspicious circumstances, with two ignominious scars on his rear still raw and bleeding.

This seemed a strong case, but it did not daunt the Counsellor. He had witnesses to prove that his client had been tossed by a sharp-horned bull, who had breached him in exactly the same way as the pitchfork had breached the mysterious marauder. This evidence was corroborated by an elaborate " alibi," a mode of defence in which the Irish peasant has the same absolute confidence as Mr. Weller.

The attempted robbery took place at two o'clock in the morning. One of the witnesses for the defence boldly swore that he had a cock that crowed punctually at that hour, and

having been awakened by the crowing he looked in casually at the prisoner and found him peaceably in bed at the precise time that the attempted robbery was in progress five miles away.

The Counsellor having made a vigorous appeal to the jury to acquit his innocent client without turning in their box, the judge came to the charge. He gravely discussed the "co-incidental bull" and the "time-keeping cock." "Putting this and that together, gentlemen," he concluded, "you have the story of the cock and bull."

On one occasion, however, even before Judge Murphy, a prisoner got off who was unmistakably and even confessedly guilty, as far as deliberate intent can constitute an offence. I remember well the judge telling the story at a circuit dinner.

To understand the case it is necessary that the lay reader should know that, by one of the curious provisos of the British law, to constitute a larceny it is necessary that the article stolen should be wholly removed by the thief. To use the technical phrase, the "aportavit" must be "laid and proved."

There had been a good deal of pocket-picking in a certain town in the South of Ireland. It was almost impossible to walk of an evening on the "Mall," which was the fashionable promenade, and come home with unviolated pocket. For a long time the adroit thief defied detection.

Now it so happened that a pompous, middle-aged gentleman in the town, whose rubicund face and social habits had earned for him the sobriquet of "Bacchus," resolved to play the rôle of amateur detective. He pinned a large silk handkerchief by one end into his pocket, and with the other end temptingly protruding walked leisurely down the Mall. In a few moments a tiny thrill on the handkerchief apprised him of a bite, and turning sharply round he collared a young ragamuffin in the act.

The young vagabond, when his trial came on, defended himself, and proved as nimble and dexterous with his tongue as with his fingers.

The case was proved home against him, yet he opened his cross-examination in the gayest fashion.

"See here to me now, Bacchus," he began with easy familiarity; "you're mighty clever?"

The pompous prosecutor objected, and the judge interposed.

"It was only a joke, me lord," explained the young rascal in the dock; "of course I didn't mean that Bacchus had brains."

"See here to me, Bacchus," he began again, and this time the prosecutor did not venture to resent the familiarity; "you swear you pinned the handkerchief to the bottom of your pocket?"

"So I did."

"Hard and fast?"

"Fast enough."

"And I couldn't take it out?"

"How could you?"

"And I didn't?"

"You did not because you could not, but you did your best."

"Just so! Now, me lord, will your lordship kindly direct an acquittal?"

"You confounded young scamp!" burst out the chief witness for the prosecution.

"Steady, Bacchus, steady, I was not speaking to you. You don't understand the law, me man. I was asking his lordship for a direction of not guilty."

"But why?" queried the judge, amazed, yet amused at his audacity.

"Where's the 'sportavit,' me lord?" was the triumphant rejoinder.

He had hit the legal blot in the prosecution, and his acquittal followed in due course.

Judge Murphy once delivered a very effective charge to a jury in an action for breach of promise of marriage. The defendant was not examined, and the judge naturally commented strongly on this fact in his charge. He was interrupted by the protest of the defendant.

"You have no right to say that, my lord; sure, I wanted to be examined and my counsellor wouldn't let me."

"All right, my man," said the judge, "come up on the table and be sworn. Why didn't you marry the girl?"

"Because she hadn't the fortune I wanted, my lord."

"How much was that?"

"Five hundred pounds, no less."

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, concluding his charge, "you will find for the defendant five hundred pounds damages. Now, sir" (to the defendant), "she has the fortune you want."

CHAPTER XIII

LAUGHTER IN COURT

Lord Justice Barry—Mislaid his fee—Asses and assets—Lord Justice Whiteside—A neat retort—Judge Webb—"Johnny, I hardly knew you!"—"Fictions founded on fact"—A startling comparison—Lord Chancellor Sullivan—The Yelverton case—The horns of a dilemma—An Irish "Miss Flite"—"I know it all by heart"—"I'm the testator!"—Lord Justice Holmes and Lord Atkinson—A bit mixed.

LORD JUSTICE BARRY was one of the ablest, kindliest and laziest of men. When he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal someone asked him did he not find the work hard. "The brain-work is not hard," was the answer, "but the cushions are." He did not put it exactly in that way.

This anecdote, however, has to do with the time when he was Attorney-General and leader of the Bar. For the uninitiated, it is necessary to explain in parenthesis the way Bar fees are usually paid and receipted. The cheque is caught under the pink tape with which the brief is tied; the receipt consists of the counsel's initials under the figure marked on the brief.

In this case the solicitor—a man at the very top of his profession—came himself with a big brief and a big fee marked on it. He was very anxious about the action.

"I want you to attend specially for the plaintiff in this case," he said, "and I have marked fifty guineas on your brief. It is touch and go. There is a chance it may be settled, but if not settled we must win. Anyhow, it cannot be on for a fortnight."

The solicitor departed, having received most comforting assurances of special attention to the case. A week afterwards he met his counsel, who advised him that the case was eminently one for amicable settlement.

Acting on this advice he did his level best to secure a settlement out of court, but failed. It was nearer to three weeks than a fortnight when it was called. Then it came on a little unexpectedly by the collapse of the case immediately before it in the list.

Everything was ready, or appeared to be ready, for the hearing, when, as often happens, the parties and their solicitors got together at the last moment and arrived at an amicable settlement.

The leading counsel for the plaintiff seemed much pleased at this result when he handed his brief to the solicitor with a word of congratulation.

The solicitor looked at the back of the brief.

" You have not receipted the fee," he said.

" My dear fellow," said the counsel a little awkwardly, " I will be glad to do anything to oblige you, but my invariable rule is not to receipt the brief until the fee is paid."

" But the fee has been paid nearly a month ago ! "

With a deprecatory smile : " You will find you are mistaken."

" I cannot be mistaken ; I put it there myself."

Then the solicitor pulled the slip-knot of red tape and opened the brief. There was the cheque inside.

The explanation dawned on both at once. The counsel had never opened the brief. Let it be added that, had he been put to it, he would have contrived somehow or other to get hold of the facts and delivered an admirable opening statement of the case.

Justice is popularly supposed to be blind, but when, as has sometimes happened in Ireland, Justice is deaf as well, the result is startling.

A judge, to whose identity I offer no clue, was engaged in hearing, or I should rather say watching, the trial of a tedious case, in which the property in dispute was a number of asses which one dealer had alleged had been wrongfully taken away and detained by the other. The case " dragged its slow length along " for several days. Voluminous evidence had been given by witnesses, eloquent speeches

had been made by counsel, elaborate notes taken by the judge. It is needless to say that the asses on which the dispute turned had been mentioned some thousand times by witnesses and counsel during the progress of the case.

At length the trial drew to a close. Counsel for the plaintiff was making his final appeal to the jury. He was suddenly interrupted by the judge.

"I want to know," he said, looking up from his notes with a look of owlish wisdom, "I want to know who is the testator in this case?"

"There is no testator, my lord."

"Then how can there be an executor?"

"There is no executor, my lord."

"Then who is the administrator?"

"There is no administrator."

"Oh," exclaimed his lordship, "no matter; I thought I heard somebody say something about assets."

Another amusing story of the same judge, though it is an echo of the tennis-court rather than of the Four Courts, may not be regarded as out of place.

He was a particularly skilful racquets player; in the midst of an exciting match, swinging his racquet sharply round for a back-hander, he took his opponent a cut on the shin-bone, which sent him hopping, dancing and cursing round the court like a frightened blue-bottle on a window-pane.

"It's broken, it's broken!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

His unwitting aggressor meanwhile waited patiently for the game to go on. At length the continued yell, "It's broken, it's broken!" came faintly to his ear.

He looked anxiously at his favourite racquet, leant it on the ground and bent it gingerly to either side.

Then he smiled.

"No, no," he cried cheerily to his opponent, "it's all right, it's all right; it's not broken, it's not even strained!"

Lord Chief Justice Whiteside, possibly the most eloquent advocate the Irish Bar has ever known, retired from the

Bench before I was called to the Bar. My very earliest recollection of a law court was his delightful reply to a witness, who coming upon the table declared :

" I object to give evidence in this case unless I am paid."

" How, sir," said the Chief Justice, " have they not paid your expenses ? "

" Yes, my lord, they have," the witness replied, " but I think they have a right to pay me for my trouble."

" Sir," replied the Chief Justice gravely, " your supposition is correct. They have undoubtedly the right you mention, but apparently they do not choose to avail themselves of their right."

There was a famous libel action some little time after I was called, which caused unlimited amusement to the profession and the public. The plaintiff, a corporation official, was a particularly plump personage, the defendant a distinguished artist. The alleged libel consisted of a cartoon in which the plaintiff was depicted on horseback in the comical uniform appertaining to his office as City Marshal, and by way of legend a line from a comic song popular at the time, " Faix, Johnny, I hardly knew you ! " The plaintiff's special grievance may be best gathered from the following paragraph from the statement of claim :—

" The said defendant in said picture or cartoon falsely and maliciously represented the said plaintiff with the lower and hind portion of his body of enormous, ridiculous and exaggerated dimensions, and partially uncovered by his tunic."

The late Judge Webb, who was counsel for the defence, resolved to laugh the case out of court, and succeeded. His speech was full of audacious humour, but it was his peroration that settled the verdict.

" Gentlemen of the jury," he said, " ladies of fashion are connoisseurs in beauty. They have so realized the charms of those graceful and swelling curves of which the plaintiff complains, that they have called Art to Nature's aid in contriving them. These elegant devices of theirs have been aptly described as ' fictions founded on fact.' But the plaintiff in this case, gentlemen of the jury, more sensitive

Photo by Lafayette Ltd., Dublin.

THE LATE COUNTY COURT JUDGE WEBB

than the ladies, unreasonably objects to have any fiction founded on his fact."

The same Dr. Webb was on one occasion counsel for Peter Mulligan, who made an application before the Recorder of Dublin for a license for a public-house. The applicant was only twenty-five years of age, and the police objected on account of his youth.

" He is very young for so responsible a position," quoth the Recorder.

Dr. Webb instantly rose to the occasion :

" My lord," he said, " Alexander the Great at twenty-two years of age had—had crushed the Illyrians and razed the city of Thebes to the ground, had crossed the Hellespont at the head of his army, had conquered Darius with a force of a million in the defiles of Issus and brought the great Persian Empire under his sway. At twenty-three René Descartes evolved a new system of philosophy. At twenty-four Pitt was Prime Minister of the British Empire, on whose dominions the sun never sets. At twenty-four Napoleon overthrew the enemies of the Republic with a whiff of grape-shot in the streets of Paris, and is it now to be judicially decided that at twenty-five my client, Peter Mulligan, is too young to manage a public-house in Capel Street ? "

The license was hurriedly granted.

It was said that the late Lord Chancellor Sullivan was for many years the real governor of Ireland, so faithfully did a succession of Lord-Lieutenants and Chief Secretaries follow his advice.

By sheer merit he climbed through every gradation to the supreme position of head of the Irish Judiciary. I did not know him at all as an advocate, but traditions of his prowess as a cross-examiner were still alive in the Four Courts when I was called to the Bar.

The famous Yelverton case turned on a question of marriage or seduction.

" Major Yelverton," asked Sullivan, opening his cross-examination of the defendant, " did you ever love Theresa Longworth ? "

The Major hesitatingly confessed that he did. The next question impaled him on the horns of a dilemma.

" Honourably or dishonourably ? "

As Master of the Rolls, and afterwards as Lord Chancellor, Sullivan was the most considerate of men. Nervous young juniors were sure in his court of an encouraging word and a patient hearing. But he thought fit to disguise, or attempt to disguise, his general kindliness behind the strict manner and the strong words of the martinet.

A somewhat loose practice had crept into the Rolls Court—where he for a long time presided—regarding the payment of funds out of court. He " resolved to reform it altogether." The moment payment of money was so much as hinted at in a law argument, counsel was instantly pulled up sharply by the curt command from the Bench :

" Produce the Accountant-General's certificate ! "

It came to pass that " produce the Accountant-General's certificate " grew to be a byword with the Bar. I remember I was out on a boating excursion with some colleagues. The weather grew chilly. " Produce the Accountant-General's certificate," said one of the party to another. Instantly a huge, well-filled wicker flask made its appearance. It was called the Accountant-General's certificate, he explained, because it was necessary to produce it on every emergency.

There was in those days an Irish " Miss Flite," as strange and as sad as the little lady of Dickens' creation. She, too, had been driven crazy by interminable litigation, and some curious fascination compelled her to haunt the courts, as ghosts are reputed to haunt the scene of their misfortune. There she would sit for the length of a day in the back benches behind the counsel, with sad attentive ear listening to the law arguments.

It was noticed, however, that a gleam of pleasure shone on her pale face whenever there was a breeze in court and the little judge let out at some delinquent. It was noticed, too, that occasionally she muttered to herself as if engaged in fervent prayer. A junior barrister, prompted by curiosity, got close enough to her seat to catch the words of her muttered litany :

"O Lord God," it ran, "mercifully grant that the Accountant-General's certificate cannot be produced."

The poor old thing had not the least idea what the Accountant-General's certificate was, or what it was wanted for. But she knew if it was not produced there was bound to be a row in court, and that was quite enough for her.

His lordship was a great stickler for precise pleading. From having been the most eloquent of Nisi Prius advocates, he had, by almost miraculous transformation, become one of the most accomplished of Equity Judges.

In a case before him the merits were all with the plaintiff, but the plaintiff's pleadings were in a hopeless muddle. Over and over again the judge harped sharply on the irregularities. The junior counsel for the plaintiff, afterwards Judge Monroe, a brilliant Nisi Prius advocate, one of the most genial and popular of men, and a great favourite with this particular judge, evaded technicalities and stuck to the merits of the case. Though little used to the Equity side of the court, his clear common sense carried him through, and he made an excellent argument.

"Quite so, quite so," the judge assented sharply. "But will you kindly tell me how comes it that there is not one word of the case you are now making in your statement of claim?"

"I'll tell your lordship. It is very simple. I drafted the statement of claim, my lord, and, as your lordship is aware, I am a d—d bad Equity pleader."

There were no more complaints about the statement of claim to the end of the case.

The following retort was still more audacious. Woe betide the solicitor that came into this court unprepared! The judge instantly launched out into a torrent of picturesque invective and threats of the things he would do the "next time." But the judicial bark had no bite attached. It was always the "next time." The offender was merely required, for form's sake, to look penitent. Presently the judge cooled down and the case quietly proceeded.

The instance of which I have to tell was, however, a particularly bad offence. The counsel, Mr. Jackson, Q.C., a

genial and easy-going gentleman—had been handed his brief at the door of the court and none of the original documents were forthcoming. Instantly the judge proceeded to paint the court red in his customary fashion. The counsel philosophically availed himself of the welcome respite to glance through the pages of his brief.

The judge in full torrent of his fiery eloquence, happened to glance down and saw him thus placidly employed. Suddenly interrupting himself, he exclaimed :

" I declare, Mr. Jackson, you have not been attending to a single word I said ! "

Counsel looked up from his brief with a smile, keeping his place with his hand.

" No, my lord," he assented blandly, " I knew it all by heart."

The judge's sense of humour was irresistibly tickled. He made one brief vain effort to look stern and dignified, then he joined in the shout of laughter that shook the court.

He was very clear and masterful in his judgments, and was almost invariably upheld on appeal. But on one occasion he was interrupted and reversed in his own court.

It was an equity suit to determine the true construction of the last testament of a man who had disappeared some twenty years before, leaving a complex will, considerable property and a large number of relatives to scramble for it.

The judge formed, as was his wont, a strong opinion, and expressed it strongly in his judgment. Having set forth his view of the will—

" This," he said, " it is perfectly clear, was the true meaning and intention of the testator."

" I beg your pardon, my lord," interrupted a voice in the body of the court, " it was nothing of the kind."

The judge was struck dumb for a moment with anger and amazement.

" How dare you, sir ! " he broke out at last. " How dare you interrupt the court in this scandalous fashion ! Who are you, sir ? "

" I am the testator, my lord."

Both the parties to the following amusing encounter are

Sir Edward Sullivan

Late Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

still alive, and both occupy high positions on the Bench, one in Ireland, the other in England. At the time the thing happened the more highly placed of the two judges was an advocate practising at the Irish Bar, an able lawyer and an eloquent speaker. He had, however, a peculiar trick of mixing the names of the parties, a particularly irritating trick—I have it myself, so I ought to know.

In the case of "Brown *v.* Jones" he was engaged in an erudite law argument. For a long time Judge Holmes heard him with patience.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Atkinson," he said at last. "So long as you persistently and consistently alluded to the plaintiff Brown as the defendant Jones and the defendant Jones as the plaintiff Brown, the court could contrive to follow your argument. But when you introduce a third party by the name of Robinson without explaining whether you intend him to represent the plaintiff Brown or the defendant Jones, a certain difficulty arises."

On another occasion Lord Justice Holmes was himself amusingly countered by a junior barrister, who was defending a prisoner before him. Though the prisoner was a rather elderly man, counsel made frequent appeals to the jury to take into account the fact that he was an orphan.

The judge grew impatient.

"I really don't see," he exclaimed, "how the fact that your client is an orphan bears on the case. He is old enough to take care of himself, and it is quite natural at his age he should have lost his parents. For instance, I myself am an orphan."

"Yes, my lord," interposed the counsel, "and should your lordship ever have the misfortune to come before a jury of your fellow-countrymen, I trust that circumstance will be taken into consideration in your lordship's favour."

CHAPTER XIV

PRACTICE AT THE BAR

On trial for his life—Murder will out—Three times tried—A close shave—A test of insanity—An unspeakable woman—Concocted confession—"I gave it to him in the groin"—Good coin or counterfeit?—An ingenious fraud.

LIKE necessity, I knew no law when I was called to the Bar, I learned it by practice as a child learns to walk by walking. An old schoolfellow, Mr. Thomas O'Meara, who had just been entered as a solicitor, gave me all his business, and it is very pleasant to remember that in the first fourteen cases we worked together we scored thirteen wins. Amongst these cases were two actions for breach of promise of marriage. In one of them, brought by a butcher against a countess, we secured damages for the butcher; in the other, brought by a young lady against a publican, the defendant, for whom we appeared, got his verdict with costs.

I found criminal cases, though the least profitable, far the most exciting. In my time I defended as many as a score of prisoners for their lives, but I had the same feverish anxiety in the last case as in the first.

People may say, "Why be anxious, especially when you know your client is guilty?" An advocate, if he is worth his salt, never while the trial lasts believes in the guilt of the prisoner he is defending for his life. All other considerations are lost in the overwhelming desire to save his man from the gallows.

It is an exciting game to play when the stakes are the life or death of the unhappy wretch who stands there grasping the spikes of the dock, with livid face and eyes of piteous appeal: a game of caution and skill that puts an almost unendurable

strain on the nerves. A single question may save a man or hang him. The advocate has to get inside the brain and heart of the jury to find arguments to convince, appeals to move them.

One man I remember well whom I defended at three separate trials—a good-looking, powerful, middle-aged man. He was accused of murdering his brother-in-law, a vicious drunkard, a ne'er-do-well, who made the lives of his wife and children a hell upon earth. One night this reprobate disappeared and was seen no more. His wife and children were made happy by his death. The brother, who was a well-to-do bachelor, helped them, and for fourteen years all went well with the family. Then, in the midst of security, the ghost of the forgotten victim rose from its grave. An accomplice confessed on his death-bed; the skeleton of the murdered man was discovered in the bog-hole indicated in the confession, and a hundred corroborating circumstances unnoticed at the time were remembered. I was never in a case in which the evidence was so cruelly conclusive. There was hardly a loophole for the most shadowy doubt to creep in.

Every day for a week I fought the battle for this man's life; all night I lay awake thinking of him. The eyes that looked out from the dock, the eyes of a newly caged beast in deadly terror, were always before me. In the first trial the conscientious doubt of a single juror alone stood between the prisoner and death: in the second there were three jurors in his favour; in the third seven; finally he was discharged a broken-down wreck of a man, the ghost of his former self.

In another murder trial in which I appeared for the defence the accused had travelled all the way from the North of Ireland to shoot in Galway a pretty barmaid who had jilted him. The only possible defence was insanity, and he would have escaped on this plea of insanity, so a juror told me afterwards, but for one apparently trivial circumstance. When he arrived at Galway he had two glasses of raw whiskey to prime him for the murder. A madman, the jury shrewdly argued, would not need a stimulant; so they convicted him.

In another murder case I had the startling illustration of the truth of Tennyson's lines :

> For men at most differ as Heaven and Earth,
> But women, best and worst, are heaven and hell.

The malignant ingenuity displayed by a young girl who was chief witness in the case, passes belief. For some slight slur, real or fancied, she strove with devilish cunning to swear away the lives of two wholly innocent people.

A policeman had been murdered at dusk in the streets of the small town of Loughrea. The girl, who was then in the service of a publican named Clarke, swore that she heard her master relate to his wife in circumstantial detail how he committed the murder.

The story was admirably devised and supported by a great deal of circumstantial corroboration. Clarke, moreover, had had many quarrels with the constable with regard to licensing prosecutions, and the impossibility of believing that a young girl could or would invent such a story told powerfully against the prisoner.

A few days before the trial the solicitor who instructed me in the case came to me with the news that the chief witness for the prosecution was a girl of bad character, who had had an illegitimate child in the Portumna workhouse.

" She will deny it," I said.

" I can prove it," he replied.

" No, you can't."

" But I can, I tell you. I have the evidence of the master and the matron and the midwife of the workhouse."

" Not one of them will be allowed to open their lips in the case," I explained. " Her denial on cross-examination as to character must be accepted as conclusive. However, I'll see what I can do."

When it came to the trial I had the master, matron and midwife all ranged together on a bench facing the jury box.

The girl gave her evidence with wonderful coolness and ingenuity. She described Clarke telling the details of the murder to his wife in his bedroom, while the witness listened at the keyhole :

" I was waiting for him with the revolver ready when he came close up to me, I gave it to him in the groin, and he fell on the spot. I ran round the corner and came back again with the crowd when the body was found and they were carrying him to the police-station."

Reading over the depositions, I found that her evidence at the trial was practically the same as she had sworn before the magistrates the day after the murder. It was impossible to break her down on cross-examination. As I anticipated, she denied point-blank the incident at the Portumna workhouse, and by law, as I have said, I was not allowed to controvert that denial. The expediency of the legal rule is plain enough. If it were otherwise a new issue might be raised about the character of every witness, and trials would be interminable. But there can be no doubt that the rule occasionally shuts an essential truth from the jury.

This time I succeeded in getting the truth in by a side door. I told the witness to look at the master of the workhouse where he sat fronting the jury.

" Did you ever see that man before ? "

" Never ! "

The expression on his face was more valuable than any evidence he could have given on his oath. The matron's face when her turn came was a still more emphatic contradiction. But the midwife lost all control of herself when the witness denied having ever seen her, she threw up her hands and her eyes in eloquent protest.

" Oh, you huzzy, you lying huzzy," she cried, " how dare you swear the like o' that ! "

There was a sharp order of silence in the court, but the truth had got to the jury in spite of the law.

Then followed a strange little bit of evidence that absolutely exonerated the accused, and proved conclusively that the story of his confession was a lying concoction from beginning to end. " In the groin " of the murdered policeman, when his body was brought to the barracks, there had been found a gaping bullet-wound. No other wound was discovered at the time, and it was naturally assumed

that the man was shot in the groin from in front. The girl was present on the occasion at the police barracks, and she shaped the alleged confession accordingly.

But on subsequent examination a small wound was found where the bullet entered at the buttock and passed right through. The wound on the groin marking the exit of the bullet was, of course, the larger and the more conspicuous, but the medical evidence was conclusive. The doctor swore the man had been shot from behind, and so the whole case for the prosecution crumbled away and the prisoner was instantly acquitted.

I never heard what became of the girl.

As an illustration of a very ingenious swindle, the following otherwise unimportant case may not be without interest. I was instructed to defend a man for coining, and at first sight the case did certainly appear very strong against the prisoner.

He had gone to a shopkeeper in Sligo and suggested a partnership in a coining campaign. As a proof of good faith, he offered there and then to coin a base half-crown which it would be impossible to detect. He had with him a wooden frame lined with tin, with a rude mould of a half-crown in the middle. Into a small hole in the wood he poured some white metal from a ladle, and presently opening the mould he took out a new half-crown so hot that the shopkeeper could not hold it in his hands, and so perfectly made that the closest scrutiny could not detect any difference between it and the genuine coin. It was subjected to a still more stringent test. The shopkeeper brought it to the bank and boldly asked if it was all right. He was assured that it was a perfectly genuine half-crown, and at his request they readily exchanged it for another.

Then the coiner explained he could make as many as he chose, but he wanted a few pounds to buy "the stuff." The cupidity of the shopkeeper was aroused, and he agreed to supply the money on the understanding he was to get half the profit. The coiner got five pounds on account and instantly vanished with his apparatus. But his enraged

and deluded confederate put the police on his track, and he was brought to trial at the Sligo Assizes.

The case was a puzzling one. I could not understand how the man with the rude contrivance I held in my hand could make a half-crown so perfect as to deceive the bank. Closely examining the wooden press, I suddenly lit on the solution of the mystery.

The hole in the wood into which the white metal was poured did not run into the mould at all, but lodged it in a cavity at the back. In the mould itself a genuine half-crown had been surreptitiously placed before the operation commenced. When the coin had been sufficiently heated by the molten metal at the back, the mould was opened and the good half-crown triumphantly displayed.

My client was indicted for coining, but obtaining money on false pretences was the crime of which he was actually guilty. As there was neither attempt nor intent to coin he could not be convicted on the indictment. I explained the trick in court, and the prisoner was acquitted and discharged by the direction of the judge.

One other case in which I was engaged by my friend Tom O'Meara is worth recalling on account of the curious result of our victory. The names of the parties have escaped my memory, which keeps a tight hold of the facts, but the names are not material.

A very old pedlar, whom I shall call Sullivan (I think that was the name), had amassed the sum of £1800, which he kept in bank on deposit receipt. He took sick on his beat and was received into the house of a farmer named Flanagan, when he died, and a few days after his death a will was produced in which he left "all he died possessed of" to Flanagan.

Another farmer named Sullivan came to my friend O'Meara with instructions to enter a caveat, alleging that he was next of kin of the deceased pedlar; and I was engaged on his behalf to dispute the will.

Very early in the trial I convinced myself that the will was an absolute forgery, and that we would have no difficulty in setting it aside. My suspicions were confirmed when,

during the lunch hour, the solicitor on the other side approached my friend with an offer to pay £1000 and costs between solicitor and client if the opposition was withdrawn. On this offer I declined to give any opinion beyond stating my belief that the will could not stand. The case proceeded and the will was set aside with costs.

Now comes the startling result. Our client subsequently failed to prove himself any relation to the deceased pedlar. He never touched a farthing of the assets, the entire property passed to the Crown, and it was with the utmost difficulty we got our costs allowed as a salvage claim.

Had the compromise been accepted, two people, neither of whom had the slightest claim, legal or moral, would have divided the money between them.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW DEPARTURE

William O'Brien, writer, orator, agitator—*United Ireland*—My first connection with the paper—Coercion—A unique newspaper—Lord Clanricarde and Sanguinette—A curious apology—Defiance and immunity.

THOUGH always a convinced and outspoken Home Ruler, I had, before I was called to the Bar, taken little share in politics beyond what came in the way of my duty as a writer and reporter on a Nationalist newspaper. I was settling down to a jog-trot career at the Bar, with a steadily growing practice and income, when my friend William O'Brien called on me in my rooms in Henrietta Street and altered the whole tenor of my life.

He had been a colleague of mine on the *Freeman's Journal*, and had been generally regarded as the most brilliant member on the staff. But he was, above all things, a fervent Nationalist, and had been induced by Mr. Parnell to abandon the *Freeman* and to found and edit *United Ireland* as a weekly campaign sheet for the National movement.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to describe this very remarkable man, who has played so strenuous a part in the recent history of Ireland.

When I first met him on the *Freeman's Journal* staff he gave me the idea of being a student rather than an orator or agitator. He had a rooted repugnance to public speaking. I remember once his surprise in those early days that I could eat my dinner comfortably at some little Press festivity when I was down as one of the speakers on the toast list. Such an ordeal, he assured me, would most efficiently spoil his appetite. He was afterwards to become the greatest platform speaker of his day, the greatest that

Ireland has known since O'Connell, an orator whose words could inspire his audience with an enthusiasm almost amounting to frenzy. Yet he has often told me that his repugnance to public speaking has not diminished in the least, that a speech is still for him as painful an ordeal as ever. As an agitator he was unsurpassed. His fiery earnestness carried all before it. Absolutely fearless, he was ready for any sacrifice, and when he led all were prepared to follow, doubts and fears forgotten. Lowell's description of Lincoln fits him like a glove :—

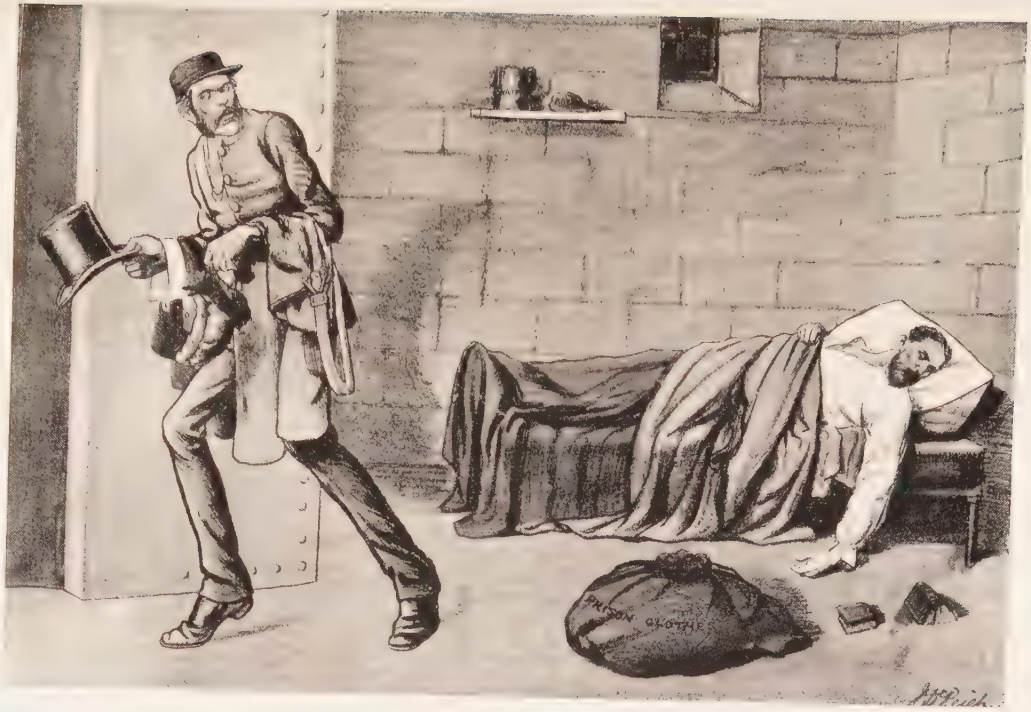
> He could not see but just one side,
> If his 'twas God's, and that was plenty.
> And so his " forward " multiplied
> One army's fighting weight to twenty.

This was the man that came to me one evening as I sat, over my briefs and law books in a great lofty room with the ceiling like the top of a wedding-cake, at a huge round mahogany table (I have it still), which was once the dining-table of Lord Mountjoy.

He wanted to consult me on a question of law. A man named Hynes had just been convicted of murder (unjustly convicted, it was believed) by a packed jury and had been hanged, to the last protesting innocence on the scaffold, and O'Brien had written a strong article on the subject for *United Ireland.* At the time he wanted to keep within the law, to give the Castle no reasonable pretext for a prosecution, and he invited me, as a lawyer, to revise the article. Ultimately I persuaded him it was best to put the protest in verse form, which I wrote then and there. I only remember the last verse :

> " Not guilty," he said, looking death in the face
> On the brink of the grave where he stood.
> " Not guilty, but you who have compassed my death,
> *You* are guilty of innocent blood."

It was my first contribution to *United Ireland,* but before O'Brien left that night he had persuaded me to write an occasional leading article for the paper. I objected that I was too busy with the law, but there was no resisting O'Brien when he had his heart set on anything. I did not



Cartoon from "United Ireland," Nov. 19, 1887

A NEW METHOD OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. Balfour: "I can't break his spirit, but I can change his clothes."

then foresee as the result of my promise I should in a short time become, and continue for many years, the acting editor and chief writer of *United Ireland*.

It came about this way. Mr. Balfour started his coercion campaign in Ireland, and William O'Brien at once set himself to the task of opposing it and defeating it.

Naturally he was one of the first victims, and on his imprisonment he refused to wear the prison clothes. One night his own clothes were stolen while he slept, but a few days later he contrived to have a new suit introduced into his cell, and no further attempt was made to compel him to wear the prisoners' dress.

The whole incident created immense excitement in Ireland. "The O'Brien tweed" was the only wear for Nationalists. In the first of two cartoons in *United Ireland* Mr. Balfour was depicted as a turnkey stealing the clothes while O'Brien slept. The other displayed his grotesque amazement at finding his victim reclothed. Ridicule is a most fatal weapon in Ireland; the incident was a sharp blow for the coercion administration.

But it will be easily understood that this protracted duel left William O'Brien little time to edit *United Ireland* or write its editorials, and so that burden gradually shifted itself on to my shoulders.

In all newspaper literature there was never a paper like *United Ireland*. It disdained advertisements and neglected all news except the news directly connected with the National movement. It lived and flourished by its editorials and cartoons alone, and it had a circulation of over a hundred thousand copies, a circulation never equalled before or since by any Irish newspaper. For several years, right up to the Parnell split, I was acting editor and almost sole editorial writer of *United Ireland*.

I wrote a weekly page of editorials, and suggested in detail the cartoon depicting the chief political event of the week. During those coercion days Mr. Balfour was, of course, the chief figure in our cartoons, some of which are perhaps worth reproducing. From a popular play came the suggestion of our Private Secretary, who did not like

Dublin. After William O'Brien's clothes were stolen in prison Mr. Balfour was always depicted as the thief.

All this time Mr. O'Brien remained editor of the paper and responsible for its contents. Once, when he was carried off to prison, there was next day a letter to him at the office from an estimable and sympathetic parish priest to say he had at once " missed his brilliant pen from the pages of the paper." O'Brien had not written a line for the paper for six months previously. Such is the power of imagination!

United Ireland was conducted in defiance of the law of libel. That is to say, that we told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and took the consequences. The result was eminently satisfactory. During the years that I was acting editor of the paper we had many threats of a libel action, but no action.

Only once in my time was an apology printed in the paper, and that was under circumstances so peculiar that it deserves to be recorded.

" The most noble " the Marquis of Clanricarde was the subject of many attacks in *United Ireland*. It was rumoured that his lordship lent money at high interest, and we rashly confounded him with that famous and more appropriately named money-lender, Sanguinette.

One morning I found at the office a long and eloquently worded protest from Sanguinette. He bitterly complained of being in any way identified or connected with the Marquis of Clanricarde, and enclosed his photograph as proof of his identity, demanding, " in the interest of fair play, on which your paper prides itself," an ample apology.

Thereupon *United Ireland* published its first and last apology, humble and ample. " It was a gross insult," I wrote, " to compare even the most merciless usurer with the most noble Marquis of Clanricarde. We could easily understand," we declared, " Mr. Sanguinette's indignation at so invidious a comparison. We willingly withdraw the charge, and apologize to Mr. Sanguinette for having made it."

United Ireland in my time had not only immunity from libel actions, but, stranger still, it had immunity from

Cartoon from "United Ireland," Oct. 16, 1887

OUR PRIVATE SECRETARY

coercion prosecutions. Amongst the offences created by the Coercion Act was the attending of a meeting of a "suppressed branch" of the National League, or publishing any report of the proceedings. It did not matter in the least how innocent of all offence might be the nature of the proceedings or the report. The essence of the crime lay in the proclamation. There was no "offence" under the Coercion Act more zealously prosecuted or punished. T. D. Sullivan, then the Lord Mayor of Dublin, got six months' imprisonment for the publication of one of those harmless reports in his paper; and Mr. John Hooper, Mayor of Cork, a similar sentence for a similar publication.

Nor was that the worst. Reporters were imprisoned for writing the reports, compositors were imprisoned for printing them, and newsboys for selling copies of the papers that contained them. All that time *United Ireland* weekly published a full page of the proceedings of every suppressed branch in Ireland.

I remember well the foreman printer, Mr. Donnelly, who was a kind of factotum in the office, consulting me as to what was to be done in regard to these forbidden reports.

"Put them," I said, "under a big heading, 'SUPPRESSED BRANCHES,' in the front page of the paper."

For three years they were printed and published within a mile of the Castle with absolute impunity, while every other Nationalist paper was harassed with prosecution.

I have often tried since to calculate how many hundred years' imprisonment I earned by those reports. But the sum was beyond me. Anyhow, I got none.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HUMOURS OF COERCION

A letter from O'Brien—The Forgeries Commission—Contempt of court and what came of it—Incidents of the Coercion Courts—Withdrawing the tone—The stealing of the informations—Mr. Balfour and the midwife—A comical conflict—Evading service—Caught!

NEVER had a man a kindlier or more encouraging chief than O'Brien during the years I acted as his deputy in the editorial chair of *United Ireland*. In all the numerous letters I received from him during that time I find words of encouragement and approval, in a few suggestion, in none complaint. I may perhaps be allowed to offer a single sample of the correspondence. The following letter he contrived to slip out to me from Galway Jail on May 4th, 1889. It is written in pencil on a scrap of tissue-paper :—

"GALWAY JAIL,
"*Saturday night,*
"*May 4th,* 1889.

"MY DEAR MAT,

"Glad to have a chance of blowing a greeting to you. I am deprived of only two luxuries—the sight of newspapers and of ladies. At a paper I do manage to get a rare—and only a rare—peep, but you will not be sorry, I hope, to hear that every number of *U.I.* I have seen does you infinite credit and has raised higher and higher my belief in your vigour, wit and sense. I cannot give you any better advice than fire away and God bless you (and my little godchild, as I seem fated not to be able to send any better marks of paternal interest than a blessing). Ask Whelan to hunt up for me a copy of my pamphlet 'Christmas on the Galtees,' in my black tin case at the hotel; also report in *Freeman* of my first speech in Parliament (about March, 1883), and

send them on to Harrington or whatever London prison I may be sent to. Kindest regards to Donnelly and all the fellows. Ever your friend,

"W. O'B.

"I have written half an Irish novel—how delighted Balfour will be to hear it—but I am very doubtful whether the best place for the MS. would not be the fire. I should like to have your opinion, it is such a ticklish experiment.

"W. O'B."

Yet the solitary personal request that I made to O'Brien in my character of acting editor of *United Ireland* he peremptorily refused. It came about in this way.

The Times Commission, always described in *United Ireland* as "the Forgeries Commission," was then in full swing. It will be remembered that the Commission was appointed mainly, if not solely, to investigate the genuineness of several documents published in *The Times* and alleged to be "facsimiles of letters" written by Mr. Parnell, clearly implicating him in the Phœnix Park murders. But *The Times*, when the Commission was appointed, shirked the issue of the letters, and devoted month after month to raking up agrarian offences in Ireland, endeavouring to connect them with the National organization of which Mr. Parnell was the head. There was naturally great impatience amongst Irish Nationalists at this delay in attempting to substantiate the direct and deadly charge made against the Irish leader. After the dilatory proceedings had dragged their slow length for some months, I attempted to quicken the pace of the Commission by a leader and cartoon in *United Ireland*.

In the cartoon was depicted a long train of the Irish Constabulary wheeling up barrow-loads of rubbish with which they were burying the judges, while the forged letters were hidden away under a tombstone.

In the article I strongly denounced *The Times* as the "forger," and roundly declared it was shirking the investigation of the letters because it knew them to be forged.

There was an immediate application by *The Times*

against the editor of *United Ireland* for contempt of court, and a conditional order was made by the Commission that he should appear and show cause why he should not be fined and imprisoned.

This was just before the court adjourned for a fortnight. The cause was to be shown on the resumption of the sitting.

Meanwhile I had an interview with William O'Brien, and begged as a personal favour that I should be allowed to take the defence of the article I had written on my own shoulders. I assured him that I had written it with the hope of proceedings and with a view to its defence. The gravamen of the charge was that *The Times* had been called the "forger" and the letters "forgeries," in anticipation of the decision of the Commission. But, I argued *The Times* was guilty of equal contempt of court in constantly alluding to the letters as "facsimiles" of original letters of Mr. Parnell's.

I urged in vain. It was impossible, O'Brien said, that he could allow anyone but himself to take the responsibility for *United Ireland*.

"But, my dear boy," he added, "you have done me a personal service. There are half a dozen Coercion summonses and warrants out against me at present. If I am caught first by *The Times* I will be treated as a first-class misdemeanant, which is luxury compared to the lot of a Coercion Court prisoner."

His first idea was to treat the whole procedure with contempt, and to decline to attend. But I convinced him that we had so strong a case that it would be a pity not to make it. His defence was a complete triumph. The conditional order was discharged, and for very shame sake *The Times* was compelled to produce the forged letters, which were instantly exposed. The result was the collapse of the case, the disgrace of *The Times*, the suicide of the forger, Pigott, and the complete vindication of Parnell.

It is not to be supposed that while engaged on *United Ireland* I neglected the legal profession. The battle against Coercion was fought in the courts as well as in the newspaper office, and in a number of strange and exciting cases I was counsel for the defence.

Very early in the campaign against eviction, I was engaged as counsel to defend a number of tenants in the County of Wexford, who had made a vigorous stand against eviction by the emergency forces. Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's volume of vivid description of the Land Wars in Ireland has an interesting allusion to the case:—

"At Gorey we went straight to the court-house with a number of priests and others to be present at the trial. The prisoners were half a dozen men and four women, who had defended their homes against the sheriff's officers, very respectable people to all appearance; and the first girl, Mary Macdonnell, put on her trial was only seventeen. She sat next to me, and I asked her about her relations. There are no boys in the family, and she defended the place by throwing hot gruel on the bailiffs. She looked barely her age, a blushing child of the shepherdess kind, or rather like one of Morland's milkmaids. She had really done the thing and scalded one of the men, but Bodkin, who defended her, managed to make the whole case so ridiculous that they let her off. The chairman of the court was Lord Courtown, who accidentally happened to be President of the Property Defence Association, whose secretary was Captain Hamilton, the agent and evictor, and this Bodkin took hold of very cleverly and to such effect that it was almost impossible the Bench should convict any one. I never was more struck than to-day with the cleverness of all the Irish concerned in these cases and the dullness of the Englishmen, or rather of the landlords and their semi-English retainers. . . . After the sessions we adjourned to the inn and sat down, some twenty of us, to dinner, when songs followed and speeches, my health being drunk and Bodkin's. Bodkin, who is a very amusing man and really good fellow, has lately been acting as editor of *United Ireland* in O'Brien's absence. He considers O'Brien's visit to Canada, on the whole, a success, but this is not everybody's opinion, notably not Davitt's, though they are all fond of O'Brien. . . . Drove down before breakfast with Bodkin to the sea to bathe. There was not a ripple on the surface, and we jumped in off a rock into several feet of water. Bodkin tells me they have often

asked him to go into Parliament, he is really as clever a man and speaker as any of them, but he cannot afford it as he has his living to make ; but as soon as there is a Parliament in Dublin he will stand. He is far from a revolutionist in his ideas, and considers that the landlords will be of great use, politically, to Ireland in the first years of Home Rule. The only wonder to my mind is how few landlords have joined the cause. But the truth is there is a monstrous class prejudice and a prejudice of religion."

I share Mr. Blunt's wonder that the great body of Irish landlords have held aloof from the Home Rule movement ; and I still hold my belief that they will receive, not merely full fair play, but a great deal of favour in an Irish Parliament.

A little later I was engaged to defend in a case of greater importance. The Woodfort tenants of the Marquis of Clanricarde were indicted for resistance to eviction. The cases, which excited intense interest at the time, were tried in Sligo, and I was engaged with the late Mr. Leamy, M.P., as counsel for the defence. We began by challenging the array, and succeeded in having the whole jury panel set aside as improperly drawn. The incident was commemorated by a cartoon in *United Ireland*. The next time the jury packing was done in open court by the Crown Solicitor. The Catholic jurors were ordered to stand aside by the hundred, and Protestants and Unionists only were admitted to the jury box. Mr. Leamy and myself left the court as a protest, and after we left the Protestant jurors declined to convict. It was on that occasion that the Chief Justice, Lord O'Brien of Kilfonora, then Serjeant O'Brien, Q.C., got the nickname of " Pether the Packer," by which he is better known than by his title in Ireland.

But it was mainly in courts especially constituted under the Coercion Act that Nationalists were attacked and defended. These courts, as I have said, consisted of two paid magistrates, declared by Mr. Morley to be " Removable and Promovable " by the Government. " Removables " they were dubbed by *United Ireland*, and the name stuck.

It must, indeed, be confessed that Nationalist counsel

were not over-polite to the "Removables," who frequently retorted in kind by having them fired out of court. Mr. Healy, for example, was twice hurled out by the police. Looking back over my own exploits before the magistrates, I wonder how I escaped a similar fate.

It was provided in the Act that the Lord-Lieutenant must be "satisfied with the legal knowledge" of one of the two magistrates, but it was not specified how that "satisfaction" was to be acquired. The other magistrate might be assumed to be wholly ignorant of law.

In one of those Coercion cases, as counsel for the defence, I somewhat fluttered the court by politely inquiring which of the two magistrates was "the gentleman of the sufficiency of whose legal knowledge the Lord-Lieutenant was satisfied." One of the two touched himself on the breast, and coyly murmured, "I am the person," while his colleague blushed like a schoolgirl.

But the Crown Prosecutor in his speech took the Bench under his protection, and declared the magistrates a tribunal infinitely superior to the old-fashioned system of trial by jury.

On that hint I spake, and drew a contemptuous comparison between the great constitutional tribunal, the palladium of the people's liberty, and a "brace of hired Government officials," "one of whom in some mysterious manner had satisfied the Viceroy of his knowledge of the law."

I was sternly interrupted by the magistrates, and called upon for an instant withdrawal and apology.

There was a moment's silence and suspense, for those were days, as I have already said, when defendant's counsel were constantly fired out of court by the police.

"I think there must be some mistake," I replied, with a conciliatory smile. "I described you as 'hired Government officials.' Are you not Government officials? Are you not hired? Are you ashamed of your position? To what can you object?"

"We object to the whole tone," blundered out one of the magistrates furiously.

" Oh, now I understand. Then, your worships, I willingly withdraw the tone. A brace of hired Government officials," I repeated in a voice as soft as the cooing of a turtle-dove. " Will that do ? Thank you," and before the court had recovered from its bewilderment I had resumed the even tenor of my speech.

On another occasion I defended Mr. Cox, M.P., and Mr. T. P. Gill, M.P., before a Coercion court in Dundalk and, an almost unique experience, defended them successfully. My knowledge of shorthand helped me to an effective cross-examination of the constable, who purported to take down the speeches for which the Members of Parliament were tried. The result was the complete and palpable collapse of evidence.

There were a number of English magistrates in court, who had come over to see for themselves the working of the Coercion Act in Ireland.

When my turn came to speak, I turned my back to the court and addressed myself to the English magistrates instead of the Removables. I pointed to the utter collapse of the prosecution. " You, gentlemen," I concluded, " are impartial English magistrates, independent of the executive. If you had to try this case you would unanimously and unhesitatingly acquit my clients, and transfer the perjured constable from the witness-table to the dock."

In a row the Englishmen nodded their assent, while the poor Removables looked on in dismay. Then they retired to consider their decision, and to the amazement of everyone acquitted the accused.

None were more astonished at the result than the accused themselves. When the magistrates retired Mr. Cox went out to have a drink, the last, as he whispered to me, that he would have the chance of having for some months."

By the time he got back the case was over and the decision announced.

" How much ? " he asked.

" Nothing," I replied ; " you are acquitted."

He laughed in my face. The thing was incredible. I had to swear it was true before he would believe me.

One incident in connection with this trial exhibits the comic character of the government of Ireland in those days. Some hundreds of police, with rifles and fowling-pieces, were drafted into Dundalk where the trial was heard. They were invading troops in a hostile country, rigidly boycotted by all the inhabitants of the town whom they had come "to protect from intimidation." Outcasts and pariahs, food, drink and every form of accommodation was refused them.

On the other hand, the "criminals" were honoured guests, fêted and cheered by the entire population. The day before the trial they were invited to lunch with the Mayor, and I, as their counsel, was included in the invitation. In the midst of the sumptuous repast a mysterious message was conveyed to the Mayor, who presided. He left the room for a moment, and after lunch he desired a private consultation with the criminals and myself.

It turned out that he had had an interview with the Inspector in charge of the police. To understand the incongruous character of the Inspector's mission to the Mayor, it must be remembered that Mr. Balfour's policy, as explained to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, was to treat the political opponents captured in the net of coercion as degraded criminals. That was all very well for Mr. Balfour living in another country, but the home atmosphere of admiration in which those men were the most honoured of the community was too strong. The Inspector's better feeling revolted against conveying two respected Members of Parliament on a common outside car from the court to the railway station on their way to jail, which no one doubted was their ultimate destination.

He applied at the principal hotel for a carriage and pair, but the hotel proprietor curtly refused to have any intercourse with the pariah. His interview with the Mayor was to induce him to plead with Mr. Gill, as Member for the Division, to allow the boycott to be raised for the purpose of procuring a carriage for himself and his fellow-criminal. Mr. Gill graciously consented, and the carriage was waiting at the court-house when the trial concluded, and drove

the criminals through cheering crowds not to the station on their way to jail, but to the residence of the Mayor.

By far the most interesting and exciting of the Coercion cases in which I was engaged was a trial of Mr. William O'Brien at Loughrea, in which I had Mr. Healy as colleague for the defence.

After the Coercion Act had been some years in full swing, Mr. Balfour, in a reckless moment, boasted at a public meeting that "the Irish National League was a thing of the past."

Mr. O'Brien instantly took up the challenge. He called a public meeting at Loughrea, which was perhaps the best proclaimed district in Ireland. An enormous crowd attended the meeting from all parts of the County of Galway. But an army of soldiers and constabulary was poured into the town, the demonstration was proclaimed and suppressed, and Mr. O'Brien was prosecuted by Mr. Balfour for attending a meeting of the very league which Mr. Balfour himself had just declared to be a thing of the past.

Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt accompanied O'Brien and his counsel and solicitor to Loughrea. In his book on "The Land War in Ireland," to which allusion has already been made, he writes :—

"April 26. We started by an early train for Woodtown (Loughrea), O'Brien, Healy, Chance, Bodkin and myself. A merry party we were. You would think we were going to a wedding rather than to a trial, but the Irish have the blessing of high spirits and no one more so than O'Brien."

I remember well as we walked together up a long, steep hill to ease the horse, O'Brien picked himself a nosegay of primroses under the hedgerows, declaring that he was not going to abandon the sweetest of wild flowers to the enemy—this when he was on the way to an inevitable sentence of six months' imprisonment.

Our line of defence was peculiar. To constitute a meeting of a suppressed Branch of the League it was necessary, in the words of the Coercion Act, that the member of the League sought to be incriminated should have attended "as such."

Day after day for weeks we produced a battalion of witnesses, who each in his turn swore : " I am a member of the National League. Every respectable man in the district is a member of the League. I attended the meeting, but I did not attend it as such."

" Why did you attend ? " was the next question.

" To make a liar of Balfour."

Our object was, of course, to cover the whole proceedings with ridicule, and we succeeded. An interminable procession of witnesses appeared on the table who all swore substantially the same thing.

We endeavoured, as far as possible, to diversify the proceedings. Mr. Healy and I had a standing bet of sixpence as to which of us would keep our witness (we examined them turn about) longest on the witness table replying to wholly absurd and irrelevant questions.

We carried the game on openly in the face of the court, with watches on the table in front of us, and we passed the money, or took it, as we lost or won.

Every evening the accused and his counsel were hospitably entertained by the Most Rev. Dr. Duggan, the best bishop and the best Irishman I have ever met. To a suggestion made by O'Brien one evening at dinner that we were intruding unwarrantably on his hospitality, the bishop replied by calling out to the factotum who waited behind his chair :

" Pat, kill another pig."

Meanwhile the unhappy Removables vainly strove to stem the overwhelming flood of evidence that we poured upon them.

To all their remonstrance Mr. Healy or myself blandly replied that if we had succeeded in convincing them of our client's innocence they had only to say so, otherwise we must continue to offer the evidence until they were convinced.

After three weeks of this burlesque, one morning the Removables appeared in court, pale and trembling, to announce that the vast accumulated pile of depositions had been stolen overnight.

Mr. Healy had before this been called away to Dublin, and I was then in sole charge. I was surprised, indignant

and incredulous. The depositions, I declared, would conclusively establish my client's innocence on appeal. They were in charge of the court, how had they disappeared ? I demanded an opportunity of examining the magistrates on oath. As I anticipated, the longsuffering Removables were indignant at this suggestion, and refusing further proof or explanation, proceeded to begin the trial *de novo*.

This was exactly what I wanted. I cross-examined no witness for the Crown, and called no witnesses for the defence. The case was over in a few hours, and the accused sentenced to six months with hard labour.

But there was still left to us the right of appeal before a division of the superior court, presided over by the Lord Chief Baron, the most conscientious of lawyers.

Under the Coercion Act the accused was entitled to have produced on appeal the whole of the depositions in the court below. The depositions were, of course, not forthcoming, and there was no proof or explanation of their disappearance.

After a long argument the case was adjourned to enable the Removables to produce the depositions, and we heard no more of the charge. All Ireland laughed at the collapse of the prosecution.

I have been informed on excellent authority that the one thing in the whole Coercion campaign that really irritated Mr. Balfour was the libel action brought against him by the midwife Peggy Dillon. But I am sure that he has long since forgotten his annoyance and is now ready to laugh at the incident. It happened in this way :—

In his speech on the introduction of the Coercion Act, Mr. Balfour took occasion to refer to the alleged misconduct of a midwife in the West of Ireland named Peggy Dillon. He detailed the alleged refusal of Peggy to perform the functions of her office for the wife of a land-grabber, with a doleful horror at the obduracy of the midwife and with a sympathetic tenderness for the patient that awakened roars of laughter in an irreverent House—laughter which the tender-hearted Secretary indignantly rebuked. Nothing further was heard of the incident for some little time. The

Cartoon from "United Ireland," May 12, 1888

At It Again

Balfour runs away with the depositions for O'Brien's defences from the Loughrea court-house, as he ran away with his clothes from the prison cell at Tullamore.

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Coercion Act passed, and Mr. Balfour thought no more of the slandered midwife.

But trouble was brewing. A sworn contradiction was first published in the papers. Of this he took no heed. A letter from her solicitor demanding an apology was similarly disregarded; then on April 27th, 1887, I was instructed to apply to the courts for liberty to serve a writ out of the jurisdiction. The following are some interesting extracts from the midwife's affidavit on which the motion was founded:—

"That I am informed and believe that the intended defendant, on divers times and occasions, spoke and published of and concerning me in my business, profession and calling, certain false and slanderous statements, to wit—that I refused to attend a woman in her confinement, on the ground that she was the wife of a man who worked for a boycotted person, and that I yielded to intimidation or undue influence in said refusal, and said defendant made use of said alleged refusal by me as the principal argument in favour of passing a Coercion Act for Ireland.

"There is no truth whatever in such statements. As the said intended defendant must have well known, it is the custom in my profession to be engaged some time before the event, and on the day on which this woman's husband came for me I was called to another patient, who had previously engaged my services, and whom, according to the rules of my profession, I was obliged to attend.

"That the publication of the said slanders by the said intended defendant has greatly injured my character and interfered with me in the pursuit of my profession and calling, and greatly decreased my practice and emoluments, and exposed me to ridicule and contempt from my neighbours, who are for the most part Nationalists and who are, naturally, indignant that my alleged unfeeling conduct should have brought discredit on the Irish cause, and should be urged by the said intended defendant as the main ground for a Bill for the Coercion of all Ireland."

It is easy to imagine the storm of laughter the application created in the court. But Judge Andrews, though a pro-

found lawyer, was the most unsuspecting and courteous of men. By a miracle I kept my countenance while I argued the case, and he listened with the utmost gravity while the court shook with laughter. Ultimately he suggested that we should file further affidavits.

I was told that when one of his brother judges questioned him as to the cause of the row in court, which he had overheard in his robing-room, he could offer no explanation.

"A very interesting case on service out of jurisdiction was argued by Bodkin," he said, but he could not remember the names of the parties to the action.

I decided not to renew the application, but to have Mr. Balfour served personally with the writ when he next came to Ireland. Then there was a most amusing interlude. The despotic ruler of Ireland was frightened from the country by a midwife. He had boasted that he had made the Queen's writ run in Ireland, now he ran from it. The situation naturally created excitement and amusement, and evoked much satirical comment and many cartoons in the National newspapers.

The following account of the service of the writ, which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, September 20th, 1887, reads like an incident in one of Lever's novels. Whenever the Chief Secretary paid a flying visit to Ireland the process-server in charge of the writ strove hard to effect service, but was constantly baffled by officials, who, evidently suspecting his mission, persistently misinformed him about the whereabouts of Mr. Balfour. This is how the writ was served at last :—

"His first attempt," wrote the *Freeman's Journal*, "was on the Chief Secretary's Lodge, which seemed to be deserted except for a few policemen loitering round the grounds. There he failed to effect an entrance, but he was more successful at the Viceregal Lodge, where the footman confessed that Mr. Balfour was upstairs in bed. But after a long wait the poor process-server was informed that the Chief Secretary had just left through a side door for parts unknown. Still determined to effect service if possible, he

Cartoon from "United Ireland," May 7, 1887

MINISTER AND MIDWIFE

Miss Maggie Dillon (midwife and monthly nurse): "I'll tache ye to take away an honest woman's character."

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pursued him to the Castle, where he learned that there were strict orders that nobody was to be allowed to see Mr. Balfour. He thereupon adopted the ingenious stratagem of declaring that he was the bearer of an urgent message from the Lord Chancellor to the Chief Secretary, which was literally true, as the preamble of a writ is a printed "greeting from the Lord Chancellor," though, needless to say, the process-server did not explain the nature of the message. Admitted at last into the room where the Chief Secretary was engaged with some officials, he had no difficulty in recognizing him from the cartoons in the Nationalist papers.

"Nothing could exceed the Chief Secretary's annoyance when he was presented with the copy of the writ. He first turned pale and then flushed scarlet, and made a motion as though he would throw the document on the ground and then trample on it. With a great effort he restrained himself, and directed that it should be taken to Sir William Kaye, who was then acting as Under Secretary, and who instructed a solicitor to appear for Mr. Balfour."

The successful service was celebrated in *United Ireland* by a cartoon, "You Dirty Boy," and some doggerel lines :

There was a young man of position
Who set out on a mud-slinging mission.
Having slandered a midwife for fun
He instantly started to run,
But she caught him before he could mizzle.

"With scrubbing-brush rough as a thistle,"
Said bould Peggy Dillon,
"You mane little villain,
I'll scrub you as clane as a whistle."

The writ was followed in due course by a statement of claim, of which the following is a specimen paragraph :—

"By reason of the said libel and slander by the defendant of the plaintiff, the plaintiff was deeply injured in her personal and professional character, and credit and reputation as a woman and a midwife, and a large number of persons who had theretofore patronized the said plaintiff in her said business and profession ceased to do so, and she was exposed to much odium amongst her neighbours for having by her alleged inhuman conduct afforded a serious

argument for the passing of a perpetual Coercion Act for Ireland."

Not merely through Great Britain, but round the world, the news ran of the approaching trial between the Chief Secretary and the midwife. But the Chief Secretary, much to the disappointment of the laughter-loving public, managed to escape the crowning absurdity of a trial in the courts.

An application was made on his behalf that the action should be dismissed on the ground that the words complained of, having been spoken in Parliament, were, whether true or false, absolutely privileged. An enormous Bar, including the two law officers of the Crown, were retained at the public expense to fight the battle of the Chief Secretary against the midwife. For three long days we solemnly argued the case. At one stage it looked as if the midwife would have the best of it. A pretty clear intimation was conveyed to the advisers of the Chief Secretary that if he did not amend his affidavit judgment would go against him. At this he was disposed to sulk at first, but thought better of it. The second affidavit was made, and the Chief Secretary had a hairbreadth escape from the infuriated midwife. The case is elaborately reported to the extent of twenty full pages in the official Irish Law Reports, where the joint names of the Chief Secretary go down to posterity together as a leading authority on the law of Parliamentary privilege.

It is, however, only fair to remember that during his stormy career in Ireland, Mr. Balfour conferred one great boon on the country which almost entitles him to rank with Sir Walter Raleigh as a public benefactor. If Sir Walter introduced the potato, Mr. Balfour introduced golf to an appreciative people, and both grew and flourished with an amazing rapidity and vigour in the congenial Irish soil.

Before Mr. Balfour's coming the very name of golf was unknown. I recall with shame that the game was ridiculed in the columns of *United Ireland*, and the name "Mr. Golfour" regarded as a term of reproach. The few votaries who first

followed his lead and formed the Royal Golf Club of Dollymount, with their caddies and their bags of queer-looking clubs, were subjected to merciless ridicule. Nationalists stood out for a long time against the game, but, one by one, myself among the number, they yielded to its inexplicable, irresistible fascination. To-day there is no town in Ireland that hasn't its golf club. Dublin is one of the most enthusiastic golf centres in the world. I could count over thirty golf clubs in full swing within a radius of a dozen miles of the Irish metropolis.

For all golf is a great game ; for elderly people like myself it is the only game. It not merely affords enjoyment, but it enforces exercise and fresh air which the doctor can only prescribe. When Irishmen are tempted to recall with bitterness Mr. Balfour's regime, they should never forget they are indebted to him for the priceless benefaction of golf.

Amongst its by-products it is brightening the day of rest and effecting its redemption from the thraldom of black black. At first all golf clubs were closed on Sunday, now they are all open. It was in the intermediate period that Mr. James Campbell, K.C., taxed by some Sabbatarian electors of Trinity College with playing golf on Sunday, set up his standard of geographical morality, and declared he never played near Dublin, and in the country only when he required rest from arduous labour.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PARNELL SPLIT

Parnell's first speech, stumbling and incoherent—Growth of eloquence and power—An unrivalled leader—The O'Shea scandal—Meeting in Leinster Hall—The storming of *United Ireland*—*Insuppressible*, a one-man daily paper—Founding the *National Press*—Capturing the *Freeman's Journal*.

COERCION in Ireland slowly collapsed. Everywhere it is ridicule that kills ; but this is essentially true in Ireland, where the sense of humour is so strong. Not merely in Ireland, however, but in England, too, as the by-elections showed, the tide was flowing strongly in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. No one doubted that at the next election Mr. Gladstone would return to power with a majority that would completely overawe the House of Lords. Home Rule seemed perfectly safe, when, as so often happened in the history of the Irish movement, a crushing blow fell from a wholly unexpected quarter.

Charles Stewart Parnell was at the time in a position of unexampled power in Ireland. O'Connell himself never held such unquestioned sway. He had created an Irish party, rigidly disciplined and full of fighting force, and held it together in the stress of a tremendous conflict. His popularity was enhanced a hundredfold by the failure of the cowardly attack of *The Times*.

It is not my intention to enter into a detailed account of the rise and fall of Parnell as an Irish leader. Certainly no one from the opening of his career could have anticipated its zenith or its close. Of qualities supposed to be typically Irish he had none. A Protestant landlord, cold, shy and reserved, and at first almost inarticulate, he seemed to labour under a disabling handicap for an Irish political career.

Photo by Maull and Fox, London.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

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In the General Election of 1874 he decided to stand in the National interest for his native county of Wicklow, but being at the time High Sheriff of the county he was officially incapacitated from becoming a candidate, and the Government refusing to permit his resignation—an almost unheard-of act of discourtesy in modern political warfare—he had to abandon his purpose. A month later the appointment of Colonel Taylor as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the newly formed Conservative administration created a vacancy in the County of Dublin. Although it was a forlorn hope to fight a seat in the then condition of the register, the National party felt bound to contest it, if a suitable candidate could be found.

Mr. Parnell offered himself, and to a hopeless fight was added a hopeless candidate. Almost my first task as a reporter on the *Freeman's Journal* was to report this young landlord Nationalist, whom nobody at the time took seriously. In a large experience I never before or since heard a poorer speech.

After the usual preliminary canters by the chairman and routine speakers, the candidate rose to address the meeting. "Mr. Chairman and gentlemen," he said, "I wish to offer myself as a candidate for your county. I desire to represent your county in Parliament. I feel it would be an honour to represent your county in Parliament, and therefore I have come forward to offer myself as candidate for your county."

Throughout his voice was faltering and his words confused, and after this brief and striking exordium he hesitated, stood silent on the platform for one long minute and sat down. This was the man who afterwards proved himself so cogent a debater in the House of Commons, and such a master of the feelings and passions of his audience on a platform.

Only a few years afterwards I heard him deliver in the market square in Galway one of the most powerful platform speeches that I have ever heard. It was there he fastened on Mr. Forster the nickname of "Buckshot," which stuck to him to the hour of his death. There were people who

thought Parnell cold. I could never think so. He lacked, indeed, the blaze and smoke of the flamboyant orator, but there was a calm, intense white-heat of earnestness in his words that, in my mind, was far more effective. The contrast between his break-down in North Dublin and his later triumphs was as complete as the contrast between Disraeli's collapse in the House of Commons and his subsequent mastery of that assembly.

My early impression of Parnell is confirmed by Judge Adams in an account given by him of his first meeting with the Irish leader.

" One day in the 'seventies," he wrote, " I happened to drop into the reporters' room of the *Freeman* office. I found there one of the staff who had been detailed to report a meeting in the country. He had missed his train and intercepted the principal orator, who was dictating his speech to him. This gentleman at once attracted my attention. He was young, good-looking, of aristocratic appearance, and talked with the accent of an English University man. He was, in short, a ' swell.' But the speech had nothing of the ' swell ' about it. In a strange, halting way he was dictating a violent, aggressive and fighting speech on the Nationalist side.

" I left the office without discovering who the orator was, and dismissed the incident with the thought that here was another of those young men of family who have occasionally fluttered round the national flag, but who soon retreated to seek some more congenial sphere. I little thought that I had seen for the first time that day a man who was to rank in the history of the nineteenth century with Bismarck and Gladstone, Lincoln and Cavour, a man so important that an event in his domestic life was to divide a united nation, to profoundly affect the fate of parties and the course of politics, and to be discussed with interest in every corner of Christendom."

When I next met Mr. Parnell he was the leader of the Irish people, and had already begun to assert his supreme authority in the party and the country. It was on the occasion of the selection of a National candidate for the

County of Galway. There was a strong objection, especially among the priests, to the candidature of that sterling Nationalist, Matt Harris, whom Mr. Parnell was determined should be selected. The priests, as was their custom, held a meeting before the convention, and they honoured me by unanimously nominating me for the Tuam Division, for which Matt Harris was a candidate. I declined the honour. Afterwards the convention was held, Mr. Parnell presiding. In my whole life I never saw anything finer than the force and dexterity with which he bent the stormy assembly to his will, and secured at last, alike from priests and people, the unanimous nomination of his candidate.

Some days later a message was conveyed to me by William O'Brien from Parnell that a seat elsewhere was at my disposal, if I desired to enter Parliament. It was a tempting offer, but I saw no way of supporting myself in London, so my poverty, and not my will, refused.

My last meeting with Parnell was under very different circumstances. For some years political gossip had been busy with the mysterious periodical disappearance of the Irish leader, often when his presence was most needed. The rumours took more definite form when he planted Captain O'Shea on the electors of Galway in defiance of the protest of Messrs. Biggar and Healy.

Still, despite those vague and fitful warnings, the proceedings in the O'Shea and Parnell divorce case came like a thunderbolt on the people of Ireland.

Their first impulse was, naturally, to rally to their leader, especially as he was bitterly assailed by the Coercionists. Nationalist Ireland felt like Moore's reckless heroine, who sang :—

> I know not, I care not, if guilt's in thy heart,
> I know that I love thee whatever thou art.

At that time I was in sole charge of *United Ireland*. William O'Brien and John Dillon, with others of the party evading a Coercion conviction, slipped away to France in a fishing-boat, and thence to America, and were engaged in a triumphant mission on behalf of the Irish movement.

I felt my responsibility deeply, for *United Ireland* led National opinion in Ireland, and I was sorely puzzled in what direction it should lead.

From the first I realized that my duty was to the nation, rather than to the leader whose conduct had imperilled the movement entrusted to his charge. But at the outset it seemed that Ireland could be best served by the defence of Parnell and the maintenance of his leadership. A great meeting had been arranged in the Leinster Hall, Dublin, in support of the evicted tenants, whom Mr. T. D. Sullivan finely described as the "wounded soldiers of the land war."

This meeting was at the last moment turned into a demonstration in favour of Mr. Parnell's leadership. The speech of the night was delivered by Mr. T. M. Healy amid uproarious applause. I never heard, even from him, a speech more pungent or more powerful. "Mr. Parnell," he declared, amid tremendous cheering, "was not so much a man as an institution, an institution that must be preserved at any cost." There was sound wisdom, he declared, in the nautical injunction, "Don't speak to the man at the wheel." The resolution in favour of Mr. Parnell's leadership was unanimously carried, and a few days later he was unanimously elected by the party, only one man, Mr. J. Jordan, even hinting that an explanation of the divorce-court proceedings might be desirable.

Naturally, I took the same line in *United Ireland*. Alluding to the outcry that was raised by the Coercionists, Lord Salisbury at their head, I wrote that "Ireland refused to throw him to the English wolves who were howling for his destruction." The phrase was afterwards embodied by Mr. Parnell in his manifesto.

But the day after his election by the party came the news that Mr. Gladstone had declared that his position, with which Home Rule was bound up, would be a nullity if Mr. Parnell retained the leadership of the Irish party. By some fatality this view, conveyed in a letter to Mr. Morley, was not communicated to the Irish party before his re-election, in the mistaken hope that Mr. Parnell would

voluntarily retire. On hearing of it, the Irish party instantly reconsidered their hasty decision, and after a stormy discussion, protracted over several days, they, by an overwhelming majority, deposed him from the chair and elected the vice-chairman, Mr. Justin McCarthy, in his room, with a committee of six to assist him. Their view was endorsed by the American delegates, including John Dillon and William O'Brien.

I do not propose to reopen that fiery controversy, of which the ashes are still smouldering. Looking back on it, each side may find much justification for their opponents to which they were blind while the conflict still raged. I shall touch only on the incidents in the controversy in which I was personally involved, and which may not be without interest when the history of that stormy period comes to be written in detail.

In *United Ireland* I followed the majority of the party and obeyed the specific instructions cabled by William O'Brien. Personally I was perfectly convinced of the wisdom of their action. A declaration from the Catholic hierarchy made it plain that Parnell's leadership must alienate their support. In the first editorial in *United Ireland* I wrote under the heading "Ireland or Parnell?": "There is but one sentiment that can master the fidelity of the Irish party to their great leader—fidelity to their great cause. He has strong claims on them; Ireland has stronger. If Home Rule is to be helped by his leadership, he must stay; if Home Rule is to be hurt, he must go." I went on to show, in the words cabled to me by William O'Brien, that Parnell's leadership "meant destruction for the Irish movement."

Again the following week I wrote a succession of editorials, opposing on various grounds Mr. Parnell's continued leadership.

But meanwhile Mr. Parnell had rapidly realized the importance of *United Ireland* in the battle that was to be fought, and determined at all hazards to capture it. In the small hours of the morning, having concluded my protracted work in the office and left the paper ready to go to

press, I returned to my house in Great Denmark Street for a few hours' sleep.

I was roused by a message, by whom delivered I have never ascertained, that Mr. Parnell was at the office. Returning with all speed, I found Mr. Parnell and a number of his followers, including Mr. Pierce O'Mahony and Mr. Leamy, in possession of the editor's room.

Mr. Parnell looked pale and weary, but resolute as ever. In a cold, passionless tone he told me he was much dissatisfied (and no wonder!) with the last issue of *United Ireland*, and as one of the principal proprietors and directors he felt it necessary to dismiss the editor for having neglected to submit the leading articles to his revision.

I replied that I had not hoped that the last issue of the paper would please him, and that I could not recognize his authority nor accept his dismissal. I was there, I said, as the deputy of William O'Brien, whose instructions I had obeyed. Since its foundation William O'Brien had acted as founder, conductor, and editor and proprietor of the paper, and had repeatedly been made responsible for it under the Coercion Act. I had never heard of Mr. Parnell in connection with the paper, and I would acknowledge no authority but Mr. O'Brien's.

Mr. Parnell declared he had the legal right, and I replied that that remained to be proved.

Thereupon Mr. Parnell, who had grown more excited as the discussion proceeded, shouted:

"I now dismiss you, and order you to leave!"

I again replied: "I decline to leave, unless compelled by legal process or overwhelming force."

At that he called out to one of his friends: "Send for Mr. Glancy!"

Mr. John Glancy, who was then sub-Sheriff of Dublin and a violent partisan of Parnell's, arrived on the scene leading an excited mob, who surrounded me with threatening shouts and gestures. "Throw him out!" they cried. "Pitch him downstairs!" and for a moment I thought I would make my exit through the window instead of the

door, and did not at all relish the look of the spiked area railings below. Turning to Mr. Parnell, I said :

" This answers the description of ' overwhelming force,' " and I walked to the door.

To my surprise and delight the crowd made way for me, and I was allowed to pass out unmolested. After I had left, one of the clerks in the office, a powerful fighting man named O'Dwyer, wrenched the leg from the stool on which he was sitting, and shouting, " Here's Tipperary ! " held back the mob until I was safe in the street.

Later on my friend Father Healy summarized the incident by the apt scriptural quotation :

" And the lot fell on Matthias."

Mr. Parnell and his friends promptly seized the issue of *United Ireland* that was ready for distribution in the office and destroyed it.

But some copies escaped their hands, and, assisted by Mr. T. M. Healy and Mr. William Murphy, I succeeded in producing a facsimile issue next day under the title *Suppressed United Ireland.*

Then followed the strangest newspaper enterprise in which any man was ever involved. It was determined to reprint in the *Irish Catholic* office a daily edition of *Suppressed United Ireland.* The printing machine was one of those old-fashioned affairs with tapes and pulleys that flaps the paper down on the type, turns it like a pancake and flaps it down again, printing first one side and then the other. I was the entire literary, editorial, and managerial staff of this new daily.

At an early stage an injunction was obtained from the Vice-Chancellor against our printing the paper as *United Ireland.* My vote for disobeying the injunction and going to prison as the easiest and most effective answer was overruled, and the issue was continued as *"Insuppressible,"* a title borrowed from a cable of William O'Brien's.

It was the toughest job I ever tackled. No money would pay for the work I did, and I was paid none. For the greater part of the time, as I have said, I was the entire

staff of a daily paper; but towards the end I had in the reporting department the able and zealous assistance of Mr. H. O'Connor, a host in himself.

During the three weeks the paper lasted I worked steadily sixteen hours a day—real hard work at high pressure. Newspaper writers will understand when I mention that with my own hand I wrote daily in leaders and paragraphs a full newspaper page of editorial comment. In addition I superintended the distribution of the paper, which was "published" at my private residence, where all correspondence was addressed. *Insuppressible* was probably the only newspaper ever published for which the demand exceeded the supply. The clumsy printing press, working all day and night, could not turn out the papers half fast enough for clamouring readers in town and country. I have still piles of telegrams from newsagents: "Send me five hundred copies." "Send me a thousand copies." "Send me the latest date you can." "Send me any date." There were no "returns."

When, later on, I was anxious to preserve a bound file of this remarkable paper I had the utmost difficulty in procuring the requisite copies.

The strain told on my health, though the excitement kept me going. I could not sleep without narcotics, which, to guard against a special craving, were varied each night. During the three weeks I lost a stone and a half of my weight, and I had one very singular experience. Coming from the office for a brief spell to attend a special meeting of the committee of a new organization, "The National Federation," started by *Insuppressible*, I was discussing some question of policy with Mr. William Murphy and Mr. Healy when suddenly, as if something snapped in my brain, I dropped down in a dead faint on the floor. I awoke as suddenly as I fell, picked myself up and resumed the conversation where it had broken off, unconscious of the break. Three times this happened before they packed me home with a friend in a cab. A few hours' sleep pulled me together; there was no leisure to get knocked out, for *Insuppressible* must come out as usual next morning.

A telegram from Boulogne from William O'Brien luckily put an end to *Insuppressible* before *Insuppressible* put an end to its editor. Honestly, I am convinced it was a choice of the paper's death or mine, and I am glad the paper was the victim. From all parts of the country came urgent entreaties to continue, and generous promises of financial aid, but I was having none.

The *National Press*, a well-organized, perfectly equipped paper with capital at its back, after a brief interval, followed *Insuppressible* as the organ of the Nationalist majority opposed to Mr. Parnell, and I was invited to become chief leader writer on the new paper. The prospect did not attract me. I had had a full dose of newspaper drudgery, and was anxious to get back to the easier and pleasanter work of the Bar. But my colleagues were urgent, the fight still raged, and it was impossible for me to drop out without the appearance of desertion. So once again Fate flung me back into a newspaper office.

I shall not readily forget the first issue of the *National Press*. It is an exciting business, the bringing out of a new newspaper. The whole staff, of which Mr. Healy was a member, watched in the grey dawn the printing of the first issue. As the huge cylinder of paper began to revolve and the broad, white ribbon was whirled into the machinery to drop out on the far side, "Tip, tip, tip," quicker than a man could count, neatly printed and folded newspapers, Mr. Healy exclaimed:

"This is the winding-sheet of Parnellism!"

My work of leader writer on the *National Press* was not exactly easy, but it was mere idleness compared with my experience on the *Insuppressible*.

About this time I had an interesting and encouraging proof that my work had not been wasted. The Nationalists of Liverpool were good enough to entertain me at a public banquet with the flattering assurance that *Insuppressible* had held the movement together in that town during the first strain of the Parnell controversy.

The *National Press* was eventually amalgamated with the *Freeman's Journal*, which had come round to the same

view, and the *National Press* staff went over bodily to take direction and possession of the amalgamated newspaper.

Mr. Healy triumphantly declared we " had captured the *Freeman* in the open sea and put a prize crew aboard."

CHAPTER XVIII

PARLIAMENT

A lively Irish election—Hard fight in North Roscommon—Speeches under fire—Blockade and rescue—A fight for a platform—"The Boy"—Personation a fine art—A pleasant surprise—Miscounting the votes—A narrow win—M.P.

A LITTLE later I will have something to say of my experience as the chief writer on the *Freeman's Journal*, but first let me tell as briefly as I can how I came to enter Parliament, and what I saw and heard during my sojourn for a single memorable session in the British House of Commons.

The tragic death of Mr. Parnell did not quench the Parnell controversy; it was still raging fiercely at the next dissolution of Parliament, and the Parnellites prepared to contest the seats in which they conceived there was even an off-chance of success. Amongst the few seats they made certain of winning, the most certain, in their view, was the constituency of North Roscommon. Nowhere was loyalty to Parnell more fervent, nowhere was the indignation against his "betrayers" more fierce. It was naturally hard to find a candidate to lead this forlorn hope against the Parnellite in that division.

Mr. Healy urged me to take the field. I protested that my home was in Dublin, I had a wife and family to support and no money to spare; while, on the other hand, I had an insuperable objection under any circumstances to accept salary from the Parliamentary fund.

"Don't bother about that," he retorted; "there is not the ghost of a chance of your winning the seat. All that is wanted is to put up a good fight."

So I went into the contest as a forlorn hope, not expecting to win, and at the outset not wishing to win. But before

I was half-way through the spirit of the fight seized me, and I would have given my right arm for victory.

I have told the story of that exciting contest, with a little artistic exaggeration, in one of my novels, " White Magic," but perhaps some of the most curious incidents are worth repeating with the exaggeration stripped off.

My popular opponent, the veteran James O'Kelly, fought a desperate fight. By an extraordinary alliance all the Unionists and all the extreme Nationalists were on his side. Our meetings were attacked by violent crowds, and many of my speeches were delivered under a fusillade of stones. Throughout the contest I always carried a blackthorn, and all my followers were similarly equipped. Sometimes in the morning before sallying forth I would tap my head lightly with the knob of the shillelagh, and try to fancy what the blow would feel like with the whole strength of a strong man's arm behind it.

Very early in the fight I noticed one figure that was never absent from any of my meetings—a tall, broad-shouldered, clean-limbed young fellow with the strength and activity of a tiger, who was known to local fame as " The Boy." When I made a point that pleased him, he would leap three feet into the air and wave his blackthorn over his head with a shout of approval that did a speaker's heart good to hear.

Boyle, the chief town of the division, was my head-quarters, though in Boyle, as in the other towns of the division, the majority was Parnellite. The nomination day at Boyle was chosen for a trial of strength between the parties. Both sides posted up green placards inviting our friends to " assemble in their thousands," and both sides concluded with the national prayer, " God save Ireland."

But the Parnellites contrived at the last moment to steal a march on us. What country contingents they could collect they brought in quietly the night before the nomination, armed them from an arsenal of blackthorns in the suburbs, completely captured the town, and took forcible possession of the platform we had erected for our meeting. From early morning they paraded the streets, inviting us to come out and be beaten. About noon I made a dash

for the court-house to lodge my nomination paper, and by a miracle got back without a scratch. The day went by slowly. Both parties had fixed two o'clock as the hour of the meeting, but there seemed little prospect of our side fulfilling our engagement.

Our opponents whiled away the time by parading in front of the hotel in which I was imprisoned, cheering for Parnell and groaning for " the traitors." That was hard enough to bear, but it was worse still when they were all drawn away to the platform in the market-place—our platform—to make ready for their meeting, leaving the streets wholly deserted.

Sitting at the window of the hotel, I was suddenly aware of a faint sound in the far distance. A mere palpitation of the air it seemed at first, something to be rather felt than heard. Gradually the sound grew in volume, like the dull boom of the distant sea or the even tramp of marching feet. Nearer it came, and I heard the deep roll of many drums slightly flavoured with the shrill shrieking of the fifes. Listening with all my ear, I caught the tune at last, the fine old Irish air " The wearin' of the green."

Half a dozen friends, who were sitting round as disconsolate as myself, leaped to their feet, and shouted, " The boys are coming ! "

The head of the procession came sweeping round the corner of the street like a huge serpent whose hinder bulk still wound far out along the country road.

They cheered vigorously as they passed the hotel and, in the pause that followed the cheer, again the faint tramp and distant drums were heard from a different quarter, and another and a larger crowd came pouring in.

When the approaching crowds caught sight of each other their cheers broke out like thunder from the threatening clouds. I heard my own name called by a thousand voices, and gladly sallied out from my hotel.

Forthwith we marched forth in united strength to recapture our own platform and overthrow the Parnellites, but were met by a double row of policemen drawn across the slope to keep the hostile crowds apart.

Standing on a chair in front of the police, the magistrate in charge, pale with excitement, began reading the Riot Act, but his voice was drowned by a savage cheer. A shower of stones came over the heads of the police from the Parnellites on the hill, and in a moment I found myself in the midst of a charging crowd that broke headlong on the opposing line.

Luckily for us the police were only half in earnest. A volley of Mr. Forster's " merciful " buckshot at the moment would have cost a score of lives ; not a shot was fired. Half a dozen drew their dirks, but for the rest baton met blackthorn. The din was tremendous as wood rattled against wood. I saw " The Boy " push on right in front of me into the thick of the mêlée, strong and active as a young panther. His shillelagh flew like a flail, and at every stroke a policeman went down. Through the centre of the line he broke his way, and was almost clear of the police when he was stabbed by a dirk in the thigh, and at the same moment whacked on the head with a baton. He tumbled under the feet of the charging crowd, whose weight and impetus broke through the police as a ship's prow breaks through the waves, scattering them on either side. The Parnellites stood their ground gallantly, but our crowd, outnumbering them three to one, flooded the market-place, sweeping all before them.

When I came to myself I was standing on the platform on the top of the slope, with a great sea of faces stretched out below. I was out of breath, and clutched my blackthorn so hard that the knobs hurt my hand. While I spoke there were " excursions and alarms " between the opposing forces. The police, with splendid impartiality, kept the Parnellites back as they had tried to keep us back at first. But now and then a stone from over their heads came clattering on the platform, followed by angry rushes on the outskirts of the crowd.

As I came down from the platform, when the speaking was over, someone told me " The Boy " was " wishful to have a word " with me.

I found him lying on a sofa, his long legs protruding over a chair at the end. There was a great reddish blotch on

his trousers at the thigh where the dirk had struck, and the linen with which his head was bandaged showed stains of the same rusty-brown. His face was as white as the linen cloths, and his blue-black eyes were brighter and blacker from the ghastly pallor.

He tried to rise when he saw me. "Glory be to God," he said in a voice in which there was no trace of weakness; "but we swept them fine, police and all!"

"My poor fellow," I answered, "I'm afraid you are badly hurt."

"There is no call to pity me, sir," he answered cheerily. "I was hurted in a good cause. Sure, if I was kilt in a good cause, what harm? I wish you good luck and God-speed, your honour. I fear there is small chance of me being out again till the battle is won with the blessing of God. But there is no use grumbling. Didn't I get my full share of all the fun that was going?"

Contrary to the advice of the more prudent of my friends, I determined on the polling day to make a final round of the constituency and visit the principal polling booths, and I chartered a fast horse and outside car with a plucky driver for the perilous tour.

Political opinion was curiously and sharply divided through the division. In one district they were nearly all friends; in the next they were nearly all enemies, with always an insignificant minority to keep the enthusiasm of the majority at boiling-point. At one village I was received with a whirlwind of welcome, to find my opponents hemmed away in a corner like a flock of sheep shepherded by the police. At another village, not five miles distant, I was driven out under a storm of "boos" and a shower of stones.

Frenchpark, a small town in the very heart of the Parnellite district, I found in complete possession of the enemy. Luckily there was a friendly and fearless magistrate, Captain McTiernan, with a strong force of police in charge. But the police had quite enough to do to keep the peace in the streets, and the Parnellites had it all their own way in the polling booths, where every official was a partisan and personation was carried to a fine art. The commonplace,

unenterprising personator is content to take upon himself the name of the voter who is absent or dead. Here the bolder and more ingenious artist assumed the identity of one of my supporters and voted against me. This was, of course, a double-barrelled shot, by which a vote was lost for me and gained for my opponent. I encountered in the town several disconsolate supporters who bitterly complained that the Parnellites had "trespassed on their names."

For an hour or so I went about from booth to booth trying to secure some semblance of fair play for my friends. More than once a stone from the booing crowd whizzed past me so close that I felt the wind of it on my cheek. Before dark a clean sweep was made of the register. Every name on it was polled out, though a full fifth of the owners of those names were in England, America or their graves. The personators did their work thoroughly in Frenchpark!

All day the excitement had been simmering hotter and hotter until, towards evening, it came to boiling-point. The news which reached us late in the afternoon that the Parnellites had captured three Dublin divisions drove the Parnellite crowd in Frenchpark mad with delight, and at the closing of the polling booths their pent-up energy was turned loose into the streets. Naturally, I was the first object of their attentions. A stone sent my hat flying under the feet of Captain McTiernan, who, as he picked it up and handed it back to me, called out in a loud voice:

"I will order a baton charge to clear the streets."

But I begged him to do nothing of the kind. I had, I must confess, a sneaking regard for those thoroughgoing Parnellites, who abhorred me as a "traitor to the dead chief" and dealt with me accordingly. Zeal in a wrong cause is better, anyhow, than apathy in a right one.

"As I am the only stumbling-block to the peace," I said to the magistrate, "I'll clear out as quickly as I can."

"I must honestly confess," he said in a low voice, "I should be glad to see you out of the town before dusk. The police have charge of your driver and car, and I'll have them brought to you here."

The car was brought up at a run, the driver cracking his whip defiantly in the face of the crowd. I jumped on without stopping it, and we fled helter-skelter out of the town under a volley of stones which rattled against the car as our parting salute from Frenchpark.

As we got clear of the town the driver laid his whip sharply over the flank of the horse, who broke into a fast trot, and we bumped along at the rate of twelve miles an hour. But at a turn of the road the horse was jerked up so suddenly that I almost went over on my head. Right in front of us, not two hundred yards away, the road was black with a great crowd of men, waving blackthorns and advancing steadily.

"What's best to be done now, sir?" asked the driver. "There's a good few of them in it."

I noticed he had quietly shifted his whip in his hand. The thong was coiled round his wrist; the loaded butt swung free.

"Back or forward, sir?" he said. "Give the word."

We were fairly caught in a trap. To turn back to Frenchpark was even more dangerous than to go forward.

"Drive slowly," I said, "until we are within forty yards or so, then get your rug over your head and try to break through."

As we moved on cautiously the crowd stood stock still waiting our approach. It was too dark to distinguish the men's faces, but there was a determined look about the crowd that I did not at all enjoy.

We were close up, making ready for a rush, when suddenly a thundering cheer broke out:

"Hi for Bodkin!" they yelled. "Hi for Bodkin!"

Never did I so rejoice in the sound of my own name.

Everything was plain in a moment. My own crowd had come out from Boyle to protect me. They had heard that I was "hurted within in Frenchpark," one of their leaders explained, and they were going in "to see about it." It was with the greatest difficulty that I dissuaded them from marching straight on into the enemy's stronghold.

At ten o'clock the next morning the counting of the votes

began behind locked doors in the court-house. I was, I am free to confess, feverish with excitement. Having entered into the campaign solely on the hope and assurance of a sound beating, I was prepared to regard defeat as an intolerable disgrace. My veteran opponent, James O'Kelly, who had faced dangers unmoved in every quarter of the globe, was as excited as myself. His face was as white as one of the ballot papers, and he twisted his moustache with nervous fingers. We had been good friends in the old days, but now we shook hands as formally as prize-fighters in the ring.

The counting began. First the papers were emptied out from all the ballot boxes in one huge pile on the great table that ran down the centre of the room. Then twenty counters set to work, opening, examining them and ranging them into piles of a hundred each, O'Kelly on one side of the table and Bodkin on the other, while the candidates and their friends watched as closely as a cat watches a mouse. By slow degrees the big heap of ballot papers grew smaller and smaller, and the little heaps spread wider and wider over the table.

At first, I remember, I seemed to have it all my own way. Nine out of every ten of the ballot papers had a cross after my name. I thought I was going to have a walk over. Then O'Kelly had his innings, and his name was called out again and again with irritating monotony.

The great pile dwindled down to a few scattered papers, and was at last completely absorbed in the regiment of smaller heaps which were arranged symmetrically on either side of the table in long columns, like the figures in a big sum of simple addition. There was an incomplete bundle at the end of each regiment—seventy-four for O'Kelly, twenty-six for me. The sheriff ran his eye up and down the columns, counting carefully ; and I tried to do the same, but the long lines wavered before my eyes. " The same number of hundreds on both sides," the sheriff said at last. " O'Kelly wins by the odd votes. Forty-eight majority—a close shave. I congratulate you, Mr. O'Kelly, on a hard-won victory."

My heart sank till it seemed to leave a void in my breast. I looked round at the blank faces of my friends who had fought so hard. Beaten, after all; I was sick and weak with disappointment, and leant against the table, or I must have fallen.

The sheriff was half-way across the room when one of my friends tugged at my arm.

"He's wrong, sir," he whispered, "he's wrong. He has counted one of O'Kelly's bundles twice over."

The sheriff's hand was on the door knob when I called out, "Stop!" And he looked round impatiently.

"I believe there has been a mistake, Mr. Sheriff," I said. "Will you kindly count the bundles again?"

"Certainly," he answered politely, "with pleasure."

This time I counted with him. At the first counting I repeated his error, the second I discovered it. One of O'Kelly's bundles had got out of the plumb-line and was counted in two columns.

The sheriff at once admitted his mistake. "Bodkin by fifty-two votes," he said.

I had won the closest contest in the election, and I was a political prisoner in the House of Commons until the dissolution.

With the joy of victory in my heart I bolted from the court-house door through the great crowd, booing and cheering, to the nearest telegraph station, and forwarded to the person most concerned in the election a wire consisting merely of my name with the coveted letters attached.

I must risk being trite and tedious in my brief record of my parliamentary experiences; but there are many details of parliamentary life and procedure that become so familiar to the Member that he forgets they are new and possibly interesting to the outside public, so they never find their way into books. With those details a few pages of parliamentary gossip may be fairly filled.

The first indication of the imperial importance to which I had attained came in the shape of letters from the illustrated papers requesting the favour of my photograph, which nobody outside my own family had previously de-

sired, and of pressing invitations from house agents to rent palaces at anything up to £10,000 a year.

Meanwhile, I was anxiously considering how I could make both ends meet on a few hundreds. My savings from the Bar were small, and my entrance to Parliament meant that for the greater part of the year I should live in London while my family lived in Dublin—an increased expenditure and a diminished income. In reply to the question, how far my absence would reduce the household expenses, I was informed: "It may make the difference of five shillings a week, but I don't think it will."

Living in London was, however, much cheaper than I had expected. The Kitchen Committee of the House of Commons caters for the poor man as well as for the rich; and comfortable lodgings can be had at a reasonable cost within measurable distance of the House.

A Member of Parliament of simple tastes, who makes up his mind, as I did, to dispense with all luxuries, including alcohol and tobacco, and take all his meals except breakfast within the precincts of the House of Commons, can be fairly comfortable on £150 a year.

CHAPTER XIX

EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH M.P.

The House—The first sight of Mr. Gladstone—Turning out a Government—The young lawyer Asquith—"Unparalleled in the records of political apostasy"—Dr. Tanner as cup-bearer—Introduction of Home Rule—Intense excitement—Competition for places—Triumph of Gladstone.

BUT it was not until I got to London, it was not until I had walked down the first day to Westminster, that I realized the full magnitude and importance of my position. When I reached the corner of the crossing facing the Members' private entrance, I was not a little perplexed at the stream of traffic that flowed between me and Palace Yard. While I stood irresolute on the curbstone, like a timid bather hesitating before his plunge, a policeman close beside caught sight of my hesitating figure.

"A Member, sir?" he said.

I nodded. Instantly a stalwart arm was raised and then, to my amazement, the miracle of the Red Sea was repeated. The traffic was arrested in mid-channel, pawing horses, impatient cyclists, lumbering vans lined up across the street, and in front was a passage for the newly made Member for North Roscommon.

The Member of Parliament's precious old-world privileges of eluding his creditors and franking his letters have been abolished, this poor remnant alone remains: the traffic which blocks his way to the discharge of his senatorial duties is always arrested on his approach.

"Good day, sir," said the policeman, with a strong brogue, at the entrance to Westminster, saluting as I passed in in a manner at once respectful and familiar. "Most of the gentlemen are already down at the House, sir. Mr. Gladstone has just come."

Even as he spoke a mighty cheer arose from the crowded

assembly in Palace Yard, and a carriage, with an old man and an old lady in the back seat and a young lady and a child in the front, came swiftly through the gate.

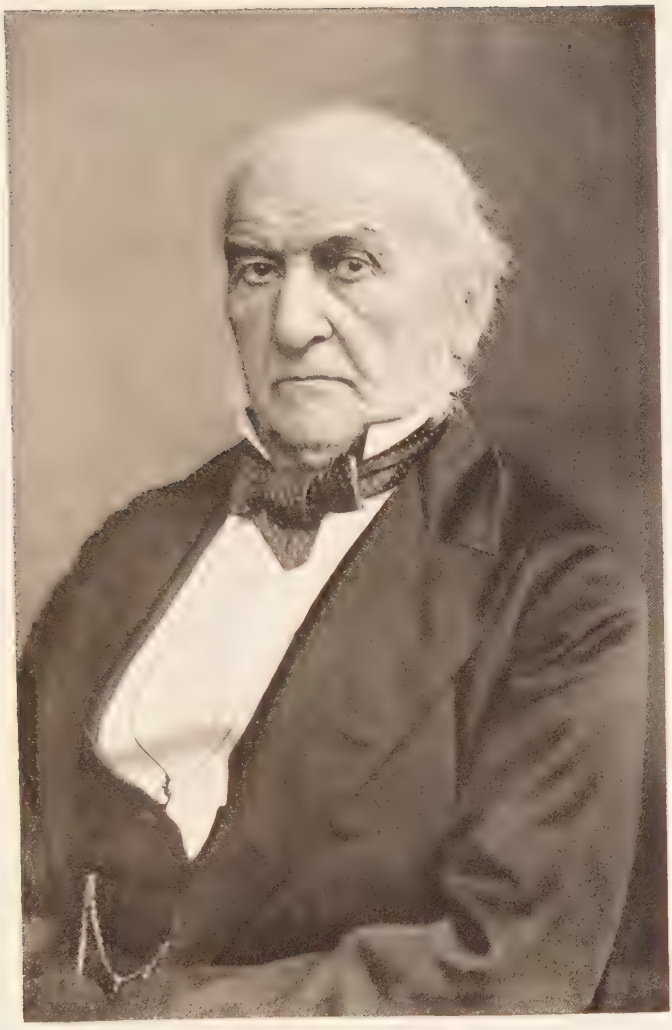
It was the first time I had ever seen Mr. Gladstone, but I knew him instantly from portrait and cartoon. His colour was creamy white, like an old carving of ivory, his eyes beaming with dazzling brilliancy. He was wreathed in smiles, and I never knew a man whose smile was more delightful. The very wrinkles about his eyes and mouth were expressive of good-humour and delight as the dimples of beauty. Again and again the crowd shouted its welcome as he passed smiling through the throng and disappeared into the Members' entrance to the House.

Entering the precincts of the House of Commons, by a door through which under no circumstances can "strangers" be admitted, I found myself in a long corridor with rows of innumerable hat-pegs on the wall. It was with a curious little shock of surprise that I discovered my own name over one of the hat-pegs, and under it a miniature halter of red tape to suspend my umbrella. By prompt application I secured a locker big enough to hold another hat (of whose use more shall be said presently) and papers and books. There are two Members for each available locker. It is a case of first come first served, and the competition is keen.

What surprises the new Member most is to find himself so well known by people he has never met in a place where he has never been. The police and officials whom I encountered seemed perfectly familiar with my appearance, and I passed without parley into the most sacred recess of the House exclusively reserved for Members.

I learned afterwards that there is a special collection of the photographs of the Members of the House of Commons, which is carefully studied by the police and officials, so that they meet and greet the new Members on their first appearances as old acquaintances. Apart, however, from this advantage, the memory of the attendants in the House of Commons for names and faces is something that borders on the miraculous.

There is an old story (I cannot vouch for its truth), that



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on one occasion the lights went out when the truant Members were crowding into the House for an important division. Some of the general public tried to mingle with the crowd who poured into the sacred precincts of the House ; but at the door stood the ponderous guardian of the place, a big and stately personage with the face and figure of a glorified butler, and he, recognizing his flock by their voices alone, separated the sheep from the goats at the entrance.

For the first two days I wandered disconsolate about the long galleries and corridors of the House, on the third day one of the officials approached me with an extraordinary request.

Addressing me by my name, although I had never spoken to him or seen him before, he said : " I want you to do me a favour."

" With pleasure," I answered, " if it is in my power."

" Oh, there is no difficulty about that," he said. " I merely desire that you will show some lady friends of mine over the House."

I must say the request took me by surprise. " My dear fellow," I protested, " you could not possibly have come to a worse man than myself. I would lose myself a dozen times in the corridors and passages."

" That's all right," he returned, " I will go with you myself and show you the way."

" But why not show the ladies the way instead of showing it to me ? "

" I cannot," he answered ; " that privilege is reserved for the Members. You will forgive the liberty I have taken, but whenever the officials of the House require favours from the Members it is always the Irish Members they ask."

So it came about I showed a number of charming ladies all round the House of Commons while it was still a perplexing maze to myself ; and like many a teacher I learned a lot from my pupils.

Mr. Gladstone, in spite of " the Parnell split," had come back with a majority of forty pledged to Home Rule. The first step, of course, was to expel from office the Unionist minority, who clung to their posts with desperate tenacity.

It was a brilliant attack, and the magnitude of issue involved enhanced the excitement of the struggle. The vote of censure on the Government was moved by a young lawyer named Asquith, then first emerging from obscurity, now Prime Minister of England, in a fighting speech, full of oratorical sword-play, brilliant and pitiless. One sentence alone of the speech lives in my memory. He charged the Liberal Unionists who sat beside him in the Opposition with having been guilty of a "treason unparalleled in the annals of political apostasy."

This phrase gave special bitterness to the debate that followed, and the accusation was repelled by speaker after speaker with a fine show of indignation. It was to the novice a splendid and stately drama full of interest and excitement, yet the concluding scene almost culminated in a farce. A little before midnight a pompous member of the Government, proudly swelling at his opportunity, with the superb self-consciousness of a turkey-cock, rose to close the debate.

The spirit of mischievous schoolboys suddenly inspired the great Legislative assembly. The orator was a big man with big gestures and a very small voice. He had, it was often said, all the attributes of a great orator except eloquence.

As he rose to speak, the rumour ran round the House that two Tories had missed their trains. Every vote in the division was, of course, of vital importance, and the pompous, self-complacent orator was speaking against time.

The rumour filled the place with instant tumult; the voices of a score of quick-witted Irish tormentors played round the ponderous orator as swallows round a crow. Every sentence of his was twisted from its meaning by some comical interpretation, the chorus of laughter and applause never slackened for a moment. The unhappy man, tied as it were to the orator's stake and compelled to fight the round, alternately protested, entreated and appealed all to no purpose. His gestures were ample and awe-inspiring to the last, but his voice died slowly away to a mere husky squeak before the terrible ordeal was over.

The climax came when the most audacious and uncon-

ventional Member of the Irish Party, the irrepressible Dr. Tanner, was seen pushing his way through the crowd at the Bar of the House. With a profound obeisance to the Speaker, he marched slowly up the floor between the densely thronged benches, a large tumbler of amber-coloured liquor held conspicuously in his right hand. The shriek of laughter that rent the House from all quarters made the orator turn at last. But when he met the bland smile of the mocking Ganymede, who stood with the big tumbler at his elbow, he almost collapsed. One imploring glance for release he gave his leader, who was stretching his long legs on the bench beside him, but with a quick imperative gesture the leader told him the time was not yet come, so the speaker went stumbling on again, helpless and hopeless, through the ever-growing tumult.

Slowly the hands of the clock began to join one another at midnight. A hundred impatient voices shouted, " Time ! Time ! " and the impotent orator subsided at last.

The Speaker rose, stately and impressive, to put the question on which the fate of the Government depended. There followed a storm of " ayes " and answering clamour of " noes."

" I declare the noes have it," said the Speaker. He knew the ayes had it well enough, but it is the custom of the Speaker to declare for the Government of the day, whom, it is assumed, command a majority until there is proof to the contrary.

" The ayes have it ! " yelled out the Liberals, and a division was called.

In the confusion of the division I had almost plunged headlong through the door of the wrong lobby when one of the Irish Whips captured me by the coat-tails and put me right. We were packed tight as herrings in a barrel in the division lobby, and the crowd pushed and wedged themselves one at a time through the passage. At long last I found myself duly ticked off by the clerks at the turnstile, duly counted by the Whips, and back in the House waiting impatiently for the momentous verdict.

The interval seemed interminable, so great was the

impatient tension of suspense, though hardly a minute elapsed until the Whips marched two by two up the floor of the House, the tally papers in their hands. There was a roar of applause when the Opposition Whips came to the right-hand side—a proof of victory. Then in a sudden hush, still as death, the figures were read—350 to 310. The old Government was out and the new Government was in by a majority of forty.

Later on I may have a word or two to say of what I learned of the tricks and ways of the House of Commons during a month or so of dull routine, which lasted till the new Government had settled comfortably into their places. For the present I will skip to the day when Mr. Gladstone, for the second time, introduced to the British House of Commons a measure for Home Rule for Ireland.

As the day approached, curiosity and excitement developed into a fever. To avoid the invasion of Westminster by legislators at the small hours of the morning, the Speaker ordained that the doors of the Chamber itself should not be opened before noon. The only result was to keep the crowd some hours longer on the wrong side of the door. From the very earliest dawn the lobby that led directly to the main entrance of the Legislative Chamber was thronged to suffocation by eager and impatient legislators. At first there was some pretence at order and decorum. Two long rows of chairs stretched from the great doors right across the lobby with a Member seated in each; but hours before the time fixed for the opening excitement got the better of patience. The chairs were abandoned, and the great crowd pressed and swayed against the double row of constables that formed a good-humoured but insurmountable barrier between them and the carved doors of the sacred Chamber itself. For two long hours we stood squeezed tight as sardines in a tin, with faces set immovably towards the entrance, and the long wait was beguiled with good-humoured banter, in which " sabre-cuts of Saxon speech " were freely interchanged. At eleven o'clock a man came to wind the clock over the door, and was overwhelmed with piteous appeals to give the hands just one turn more.

At last, just as Big Ben boomed out twelve, making the air shake with the deep sound of the strokes, the double row of obstructive policemen melted away. The doors suddenly opened, and the tumultuous crowd of excited legislators went through into the solemn Chamber like a mill-stream when the dam goes down.

I had done a little football in my time, but I had never been in a scrimmage so rough and fierce as this great stampede of Members that went tearing along the floor of the "most august assembly in the world."

We swept like a drove of cattle along the passages, scattered and scrambled like monkeys over the benches, and in the twinkle of an eye there was a hat on every seat in the Chamber. I was lucky in the scramble, and secured a corner seat almost facing Mr. Gladstone's place on the Treasury bench opposite. By prayer-time every lane and alley of the Chamber was crammed as tight as they could hold with imported chairs, every stair of the gangways was claimed by a hat.

The various galleries, however, reserved for ladies, for distinguished personages, and for the Peers and the general public were still empty. Until prayers are over no stranger is admitted to the precincts, but as the final "Amen" was pronounced by the Chaplain of the House the sound of a second and still more excited scramble broke upon my ears.

Glancing to the Peers' Gallery, I was just in time to see the Ancient Nobility of England a confused whirl of lordly legs and arms, all struggling together in inexplicable confusion, tumble into the narrow receptacle the House of Commons provides for the peerage.

The House settled down for a while with outward calm to the transaction of ordinary business, but all the time there was a tenseness in the atmosphere which spoke of a coming storm, and when at last the Grand Old Man himself appeared, *débonnaire* as a bridegroom, with a fresh rosebud in his button-hole, the whole place went mad once more with unrestrained excitement. Irish Nationalists and English Liberals leaped to their feet, waving their hats and cheering until the vast volume of sound seemed to shake

the carved roof of the historic Chamber, which in all its long and varied history had never witnessed a more exhilarating scene. Then suddenly the sound died out to still silence, for the speech so long and so eagerly looked for had begun, and the greatest statesman and orator of his generation was unfolding the details of his proposed treaty of peace between two nations whose bitter feud had lasted through seven centuries.

His voice was low at first, but gathered power at every word till it filled the building, strong and pure, like the master tones of an organ. No attribute of an orator was, in my poor judgment, lacking in that marvellous speech—lucid exposition, clear reasoning, passionate appeal, captured alike the hearts and minds of his hearers. Erect, alert, with word and face and gesture fitted to the thought, in that miraculous man the vigour of youth and the dignity of age were marvellously combined.

It was not in any sense a fighting speech. There was no attack on opponents, nothing that rasped or jarred.

> Truth the mild robe of soft persuasion wore,
> And e'en reluctant party felt awhile
> That magic power.

Unionists were so carried away by his eloquence that they applauded with the Home Rulers. We lost count of time while he spoke. Not a man in the room, friend or foe, was unmoved by the thrilling earnestness of his voice. When he closed with a peroration of surpassing eloquence, dead silence followed,—the silence of strong feeling. Then cheers broke out unrestrained from all sides of the House.

Speaking for one man alone, he completely captured me, heart and soul. The strain of enthusiasm became almost unbearable: I listened in a kind of ecstasy as the great speech drew to a close, in solemn majestic rhythm, sublime as the utterance of an inspired prophet; I felt as if nothing could resist him, that Home Rule was already won by a unanimous vote.

The moment Mr. Gladstone sat down a young Irish Unionist barrister, Dick Dane, a friend of my own, who had just come to the House, with splendid audacity sprang to his

feet to answer him. But the Speaker looked the other way, and Sir Edward Clarke replied as spokesman of the Opposition.

There followed a general engagement, in which the big guns on the Front Benches opened fire in succession on one side or another, and a vast amount of argument and eloquence was expended without changing a vote. The second reading of the Bill was carried by the expected majority of forty, and we lapsed into the dull tedium of committee, where the Unionists, turning the weapons of the Irish party against themselves, obstructed remorselessly. But there were none of the lively excursions and alarms of Irish obstruction, it was a weary, weary time of frivolous amendments, dull speeches and incessant tramps through the division lobbies.

CHAPTER XX

HUMOURS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

"Efficacy of prayer"—The Speaker's procession—Hats—Gladstone's comical experience—The hard-worked—"Hear! hear!"—Guy Fawkes up-to-date—Searching the vaults for gunpowder—Socialism and sociality—Gladstone's surprise speech—Biggar's formula, "All real here, mister."

MEANWHILE I was learning my way about the House of Commons, and almost my first lesson was concerned with the "efficacy of prayer," though hardly in the sense by which the phrase is understood by theologians. It is ordained that every sitting of the House is opened with prayer, and the devout attendance of the Members is ingeniously enforced.

I remember well with what a shock of surprise I got my first peep at the Speaker in his regimentals. I was coming down a long corridor with a glass door at the end of it, when a confusion of electric bells began to ring here, there and everywhere all over the place. A great red-bearded policeman on duty just behind the glass door seemed shaken with convulsions, his whole body contracted for a mighty effort, his knees bent, his hands doubled up, his mouth opened wide, then all at once a roar rang through the building that shook the windows.

"Speaker!" yelled the policeman with the full force of his lungs.

"Hats off, Speaker!" came the cry from the attendants, and up through the long corridor there swept a procession that seemed to come right out of the Middle Ages. The Speaker himself moved at its head, stately, austere, in a big beehive wig and flowing black robes. Behind him came the Serjeant-at-Arms in antique dress of black silk and white lace, a sheathed rapier at his side and the huge gilded mace,

" the bauble " that Cromwell spoke of so contemptuously, borne on his shoulder. The Speaker's chaplain in robes and bands represented the spiritual element of the ceremonial.

As the procession passed the cry grew more deafening. " Speaker, Speaker. Hats off, strangers ! " and the procession slowly wound itself through the lobby into the Legislative Chamber through the carved door which closed behind it.

To encourage devotion among the Members, it is arranged that only those who are present at prayers can secure seats for the day. The method of securing a seat in the House of Commons approaches a fine art. The early Member takes the early seat by planting on it his hat and a card inscribed with " Prayers " in big letters. But his right is established only until prayer-time. If he be absent from prayers, any more devout Member may " jump his claim," removing the hat and card. Prayers over, a little printed card stuck in a brass sconce at the back of the seat secures the rights of exclusive occupation till the rising of the House.

The rule, like all rules, is liable to evasion and abuse. Mr. Bradlaugh's irreligious scruples were too strong to permit him to be present in the House at prayer-time, but, as I was told, he used to watch at the open door with hat in hand ready to pounce for a seat the moment " Amen " was intoned.

It is on record that Dr. Tanner, on one memorable occasion in his zealous discharge of his duty as Whip of the Irish party, came down to the House at dawn with a cab-load of old hats to secure seats for his leaders.

It is here that the spare hat in the locker came in handy. " One man one hat " was the rule laid down by the Speaker, but it was more honoured in the breach than the observance, and many a Member paraded the City in the forenoon with his best hat on his head while his second best stood sentinel on a seat in the House of Commons.

The hat, I may add, plays a tremendous part in parliamentary procedure. Woe betide the incautious novice who wears it when he should not, or doesn't wear it when he

should. His crime is almost as great as if he had passed between the speaking Member and the Speaker, and his horror-stricken colleagues roar "Order! Order!" at him as fiercely as if he had committed the unpardonable sin.

The accomplished Member of the House of Commons prides himself on the "nice conduct of a cloudless hat." The unwritten law ordains that a Member must wear his hat when he is sitting, and must not wear it when he is standing. Before a division is called it is a gross breach of order to address the House with hat on, after division is called it is just as gross a breach of order to address the House with hat off.

I remember once Mr. Gladstone was himself the victim of the rule. The Front Bench men, ministers and ex-ministers, who enjoy their seats by prescriptive right, and don't need hats to secure them, always come bareheaded into the House.

A division was called, Mr. Gladstone desired to address the Speaker on a point of order; his hat was in his own room, the hats of his colleagues were in theirs. What was to be done? A whisper ran round the benches, and from afar off an humble supporter of the Grand Old Man sent his hat to the rescue. But in the hurry there had been no time to pick and choose, and the hat was half a dozen sizes too small for Mr. Gladstone. It perched rakishly on the high, white dome of his head while he solemnly addressed the Speaker amid roars of laughter from an irreverent House.

But Mr. Gladstone, I observed, did not laugh. Nor did he, I am sure, in the slightest degree appreciate either the humour of the situation or the absurdity of the rule. To him it was an ancient tradition of the House, and that alone was sufficient to secure its respectful observance.

During my few years in Parliament I often observed with surprise that this very great man was a rigid stickler for very small observances and ceremonial. He was specially a martinet in regard to the rules governing the conduct of the House, and I have still before me, as one of the most

comical pictures I have ever seen, the grave decorum of face and voice with which he addressed the Speaker, balancing that ridiculous little hat on his head with the skill of an acrobat.

By an imperative custom of the House of Commons its Members can only express their feelings by the repetition of the word "Hear, hear!" No other word is "in order."

But this monosyllable, as employed in the House of Commons, is the most expressive word in the language. There is no sentiment in the entire gamut of feeling that cannot be conveyed by the "hear, hear" of an experienced Member of Parliament—admiration, approval, affection, enthusiasm, indignation, contempt, ridicule, all are within the compass of this one word.

Humpty Dumpty in "Alice in Wonderland," who made any word mean exactly what he chose it to mean, had not more dominion over his subjects than a skilled operator exercises over the parliamentary monosyllable, which for many Members constitutes their entire parliamentary vocabulary.

Apropos of this, I might mention an amusing incident that occurred at a later date in my experience of the House.

The present Lord Salisbury was holding forth on School Board Education in a speech replete with tiresome technical statistics of attendance and expenditure. The dull sentences poured along like the brook, for ever and for ever. There seemed to be no prospect of an end to the oration. Suddenly an Irish Member emphasized a statement with regard to "two pence three farthings" with the "hear, hear" of rapturous approval.

The hint was instantly taken. At the close of every sentence of the trite and tiresome harangue there came a burst of such wild and spontaneous enthusiasm as had never been evoked by the most eloquent peroration of Mr. Gladstone's. At first it seemed as though the orator fancied he had moved the hearts of the Members by his appeal. But the continued and uproarious applause slowly forced

upon his mind the suspicion of an ironical demonstration. He struggled on for a few sentences, amid the ever-growing enthusiasm, then suddenly he collapsed and sat down in the middle of a sentence.

Whatever the party in power, the House of Commons itself is essentially a conservative institution. It despises the Shakespearean warning :—

> What custom wills in all things should we do,
> The dust of antique time would be unswept.

"The dust of antique time" is all over the place. Absurd old customs dating back to the Middle Ages, customs which have lost all meaning with the flux of years, are preserved in the House of Commons with all the sanctity of religious observances.

I was lounging in the empty Legislative Chamber one morning before the House sat, when the sound of footsteps at the door attracted my attention, and looking round suddenly, I could hardly believe that my astonished eyes saw what they seemed to see. I was taken back again into the days when Charles II was king. This big, quiet Chamber with its wide rows of empty benches was suddenly alive with the figures and costumes of the reign of the liveliest of the Stuarts.

A troop of "Beef-eaters," with their white tunics and buff breeches, coloured hose and apple-pie hats bedecked with variegated ribbons, moved solemnly down the centre of the House, and each as he moved swung from his finger an old horn lantern. A stately person in antique Court dress paced in front of this grotesque procession. For a moment I was unable, if I may use the expression, to place the performance, then suddenly it dawned on me. I had heard vaguely of this pageant before. It was Guy Fawkes who was responsible: the "Beef-eaters," according to custom, stretching back through many centuries, were on their way with dim horn lanterns to search the electric-lit cellars of the House of Commons for gunpowder barrels and masked conspirators. The absurd make-belief was conducted with the utmost solemnity. The mummers and the few English Members who respectfully followed the extraordinary

procession were grave in their demeanour as the attendants at a funeral, no one smiled but myself.

By a scarcely less grotesque ceremonial, statutes which have made their perilous way through both Houses of Parliament finally receive the Royal assent and so pass into law.

I have but a dim recollection of once witnessing the performance. There were a number of figures in wigs and gowns and curious robes, who moved like puppets through the ceremonial. One, I remember, read in a droning voice the title of the Act; the other twisted sharp round, as if moved by clockwork, and jerked out like the bird of the cuckoo clock in a mechanical voice: "La reine le veut," and straightway the Bill became an Act of Parliament.

I think it is Oliver Wendell Holmes that somewhere puts the question whether life is a small bundle of big things, or a big bundle of little things. The latter would more probably be the description of the life in the House of Commons, at least during my experience; for one lively or exciting day we had a week's monotony.

The House has been described as the best club in the world, and in one essential it amply merits the description. No man dare play the snob in the House of Commons on the strength of his rank or his money. Over its portals might be written: "All 'side' abandon, ye who enter here." Cook's son and duke's son are on perfect equality; and if the cook's son is a clever fellow and the duke's son—as sometimes happens—is a fool, the cook's son is courted by the Members and the duke's son is ignored. In the smoking-room especially this social freemasonry is most conspicuous. The man who wants a banquet and the man who wants a beefsteak cannot well dine at the same table. But in the smoking-room all class distinctions are abolished. Equality and geniality prevail. There the Members of all shades of politics and with all kinds of smoking utensils, from a half-crown cigar to a clay pipe, forgather on terms of perfect equality. In comparison with the Legislative Chamber the smoking-room is the Palace of Truth. Nationalists

and Unionists met there on the most friendly terms at the same tables. The opposition so vehement in the House was practically abandoned in the smoking-room.

I remember well on one occasion, just after Mr. Gladstone's great speech introducing the Home Rule Bill, I asked a prominent Conservative, Mr. Hanbury, afterwards one of the ablest members of a Unionist Cabinet :

" How would you vote if Mr. Balfour made that speech instead of Mr. Gladstone ? "

" That," he answered, laughing, " is not a fair question even for the smoking-room," and I did not press for any further reply.

Now and again, of course, the sharp stress and strain of party feeling dominated all personal feelings, but as a rule personal friendship ran in the most curious way, zigzag across the line of party divisions. To take one illustration, there was no man more popular with the Irish party than poor old Johnston of Ballykilbeg, and I think he reciprocated our friendly feeling.

I remember he once cordially invited me to join a 12th of July demonstration in Belfast. " Why," I replied, " a papist would be killed if he showed his nose on such an occasion." " Not if you come with me," he answered, a proviso that was not wholly encouraging, and I respectfully declined the invitation.

On some other occasion some chartered bore was delivering a long-winded oration when old Johnston suddenly, apropos of nothing at all, moved the adjournment of the House. The spirit of mischief tempted me to second the motion, and the conjunction so delighted the assembly, with whom a small joke always went a long way, that it was almost unanimously carried, and we broke up tumultuously like schoolboys at an unexpected half-holiday.

Humour is indeed keenly appreciated in the House of Commons, which loves a joke however poor or small. It will roar with laughter if a nervous speaker collapses on his own hat, or an excited orator in the full fury of his eloquence batters the hat of a brother Member over his eyes. The man who, like Mr. Healy, amuses the House can do what

he likes with it, anything and everything will be forgiven him.

Perhaps the explanation for this craving for diversion is to be found in the fact that all forms of entertainment are rigorously excluded from the precincts of Westminster.

No game is allowed except the laborious game of chess. In the vast library light literature is to a great extent tabooed, and the long monotonous rows of heavy books of reference have a decidedly depressing effect. No wonder Members wander into the smoking-room for a lounge and a gossip when a bore is in possession of the Legislative Chamber.

The *bête noir* of the smoking-room is the division bell. Just as you have lit up and leant back in a particularly cosy arm-chair for a pleasant chat the infernal "tingle, tingle," is heard in all places at once, seeming to pervade the entire air, persistent, insistent, not-to-be-denied.

You have to go rushing up narrow staircases and through long corridors to record your vote on some question, the merits and demerits of which you are absolutely ignorant, though it may chance that the very existence of the Government hangs upon the decision.

Of course, you are not allowed to carry a lighted cigar or pipe through the division lobby, and I remember it was esteemed a notable feat to get through the lobby and record your vote in time to catch cigar or pipe still alight on the marble table of the smoking-room, where you laid it when the division bell rang out its insistent summons.

Another drawback to the perfect comfort of the smoking room, especially when Mr. Gladstone was still in the House, was the feeling that lounging idly there you might miss something really good in the Legislative Chamber.

You could never tell when that miraculous old man would electrify the proceedings with a matchless oration. On one occasion "in the mid waste and middle" of dinner-hour, when the Legislative Chamber was almost empty, he took it into his head to trounce Mr. Chamberlain, a task which he accomplished with unrivalled freedom and finish. By great

good luck I happened to be in the House at the time: I was one of the few who were so fortunate. The speech was as short as it was brilliant, and before the news had got abroad that Mr. Gladstone was on his legs he had sat down again. We who heard this wonderful speech hugged ourselves on our good fortune, they who missed it were loud in their lamentation. I met Mr. Healy a little while after in the lobby.

"What did you think of that?" he demanded enthusiastically.

"The best debating speech I have ever heard."

"Debating speech be hanged!" he replied; "it was the best speech Gladstone ever made. By heaven, it was the best speech any man ever made."

Towards the end of my time in the House, however, a device had been perfected to obviate the risk of missing such a treat. A wide space has been arranged conspicuously at the end of the smoke-room, which automatically records the name of each speaker as he rises to address the House. I used to think it gave an additional zest to the flavour of a cigar to see the name of some pretentious bore loom large across the board, and to think of the fate of the Speaker and the Serjeant-at-Arms who were his only audience.

This is no exaggeration. Over and over again, glancing through the House at dinner-time, I saw the vast dreary waste inhabited only by three figures: the Speaker in his huge carved chair on the dais, the Serjeant-at-Arms in his little sentry-box at the entrance, and the dreary bore who poured out his platitudes on those two helpless victims and to a desert of empty green benches.

It is not to be supposed that there are great speeches every night or every week, or I might even say every month. Apart from the interest of the place and the sense of power which its membership confers, the routine of parliamentary life is dull enough in all conscience. The largeness and vitality of the issues involved, however, redeem it from tediousness. For most men it has an absorbing infatuation, which, after a while, makes itself felt in spite of the mono-

tony. The late Mr. Biggar lived in the House and for the House, he had no other interest or amusement. It is told that on one occasion when his friends asked him why he never went to the theatre, he replied :

"This is better than any theatre, mister. It is all real here."

CHAPTER XXI

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Question time—Bowling and batting—The alleged poet Homer—The tribulations of Private Members—The count out—Labouchere's strong language—The all-night sitting—" Who goes home ? "—The devotion of Mrs. Gladstone—A touching episode.

THERE are all sorts of unexpected interludes to mitigate the dulness of parliamentary life, and question time is specially fruitful of such interludes. Questions, as a rule, were not designed for the purpose of eliciting information. The object was generally to put the Minister questioned in the wrong box—to convict him or his department of misconduct ; under cover of a note of interrogation to contrive an attack on political opponents.

Question time, to my mind, had a curious resemblance to a game of cricket, in which the Opposition bowled and the Ministers batted. There were fast balls and underhand twisters. Sometimes the Ministers scored heavily off the bowlers, sometimes their wickets were taken. The Speaker was umpire, and called " No ball "—I mean " Order ! order ! "—if an irregular question was delivered. We used to have a good deal of quiet fun occasionally at this game, when a single question developed into a catechism, before the Speaker could effectively interpose.

On one occasion Mr. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, whose comic bigotry was a source of perennial amusement, objected in the form of a question to the use in primary schools of the book containing Moore's song, " Row, brothers, row," on the ground that its allusion to " saints of our own green isle " inculcated the worship of saints.

Before the Minister could reply I popped up with a supplementary question.

" Is the right honourable gentleman aware," I asked, with

a face as grave as a mustard-pot, " that in the intermediate schools and universities they require the study of an alleged poet named Homer, who encourages the worship of Jupiter, Juno, Venus and other objectionable personages ? "

" Order, order ! " cried the Speaker smilingly. " I am afraid that question savours of ridicule." But the uproarious laughter of the House told me that I had scored.

I was specially delighted with the face of Mr. Gladstone, right opposite where I sat. He gave a little start of dismay at the sacrilege of " an alleged poet named Homer," but when he caught the point of the question his whole face wrinkled with laughter.

Another source of much enlivenment in the House were the vagaries of " private Members " who desired to enshrine their special hobbies in the Statute Book. The " Private Members' Bills," as they are called, are subject to the most stringent regulations. The objection of a single Member blocks the Bill at any stage. No debate, no discussion is allowed ; the Speaker passes at once to the next item on the programme.

No one that has not witnessed it can realize the humour of the proceeding. To a private Member his Bill is as precious as an only child to a doting mother. He seems to fondle it in his arms. There is a tremor of anxiety in his voice as he strives to advance it a stage towards the triumph of enactment. Then an enemy, often close beside him, gets up, and with the fatal phrase, " I object ! " seals its fate for the night. A few words of gentle expostulation are attempted, generally without effect, and the private Member resumes his seat, still sadly fondling his unhappy offspring.

It was particularly amusing to see the cynical Mr. Labouchere as one of the chief actors in this little comedy.

Mr. Labouchere had a private Bill called, I think, the " Chimney Sweepers Protection Bill," for which he evinced a more than maternal affection. Night after night it was blocked by a Mr. Bolton, for whom Mr. Labouchere entertained an unmitigated hatred and contempt. One night, however, in an unhappy moment he attempted to propitiate

the enemy. He made a humble appeal to Mr. Bolton in which he described the innocence and beauty of the Bill, but Mr. Bolton retorted with the sternly repeated " I object ! "

Thereupon Mr. Labouchere's temper got the better of him, and he retorted " You to blazes ! " in a voice audible to everyone in the House, except (apparently) the Speaker, who took no notice of the incident or the shriek of laughter that followed.

A " count out " is a kind of practical joke much esteemed by legislative humorists, especially as the result is an unexpected holiday. It generally comes off on what was called " private Members' nights," when the House resolves itself into a kind of debating society, and private Members who were lucky in the ballot get an opportunity of airing their pet fads. On these occasions the House usually emptied itself out to the dregs. Then some malevolent Member would call the attention of the Speaker, who would never notice it of his own accord, to the fact that there was not a quorum of forty present.

A few minutes' grace was allowed, however, " to make a House." The contest was keen between those who wanted and those who didn't want an adjournment, and Members were encouraged or obstructed on their way to the Chamber. It was especially amusing on those occasions to watch the crowds of " counters out " skulking just outside the official range of the Speaker's eye. On some occasions Members with a pet hobby to exercise were known to entertain a dinner-party of forty Members on the premises, who were expected in return for food and wine to " keep a House " for their entertainer.

The kitchen of the House of Commons needs its subsidy of a few thousand a year, for it is a restaurant that can never count its customers beforehand. A sudden " scene " may unexpectedly detain a few hundred Members to dinner, a " count out " may send as many intending diners scurrying off to their own homes.

Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered that the commissariat department occasionally breaks down. I remember on the occasion of one of the few all-night

sittings in which I participated we were compelled to support fainting nature on hard-boiled eggs and bread and cheese.

I came into the House of Commons at a time when, apart from the large issues involved, it was especially dull and trying for an Irish Member. The Tories had all the fun : they were playing the lively and exciting game of obstruction. Our daily duty was to sit silent and vote. Every word spoken was a trespass on the time of the House, which the Government regard, and rightly regard, as their most valuable asset. I used to look back with envy and regret on the good old days of lively Irish obstruction, when the enemy were in power and when the longer an Irish Member spoke, and the oftener, the better he deserved of his party.

Even our all-night sittings were poor and tame in comparison with the strenuous old days, when the floor of the library was strewn with sleeping Members, like soldiers in an encampment ready at the battle-call to spring up and rush into the fray.

We occasionally sat up all night discussing interminable trivialities, dreary as " a twice-told tale, vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man," and welcomed with enthusiasm the shout of a score of policemen " Who goes home ? " which announces the fall of the curtain on the night's performance. The shout itself is reminiscent of the days when the footpads that frequented the streets of London made going home a service of danger, and Members herded together for mutual protection. In modern days, however, the shout is but a warning to the vast array of vehicles, of all shapes and sizes, with which Palace Yard is thronged, to carry off the weary legislators to bed.

The scene, as I crept wearily out from the dim light and stuffy air of the House into the pure freshness of the dawn, was a new revelation of the truth and beauty of Wordsworth's exquisite sonnet :—

> This city now doth like a garment wear
> The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
> Open to the fields and to the sky.
> . . . . . .

> The river glideth at his own sweet will.
> Dear God, the very houses seem asleep,
> And all that mighty heart is lying still.

The wide space of Palace Yard at such times was a perfect wilderness of prancing horses, whirling vehicles and flashing lights.

Necessity is the mother of innovation. I could not afford even the cheapest vehicle to carry me to my distant lodgings, so I was the first to introduce the humble bicycle into this aristocratic society. My example was followed by many others. Even Mr. Balfour for a time, before the advent of the motor, condescended to the bicycle. But at first mine was the solitary bike amongst the wilderness of vehicles, and I remember well the pleasure with which I jumped upon my lowly steed, gave the whole glittering procession a lead up the smooth wooden pavement of Whitehall, and out-distancing them all stole swiftly and silently through the silent streets to my lodgings in the suburbs.

The House of Commons, if it is the best club, is assuredly the most ungallant assembly in the world. Nor have its temper and character been improved by recent feminine invasions. The gallery reserved for ladies is, as everyone knows, narrow, dark, and fenced with a close brass grating that suggests the harem of an Eastern potentate.

I have been to the Ladies' Gallery, of course, many times, and can vouch for it that it is only possible to see through the narrow opening of the grating angular sections of the faces of the speakers in the House below. The reason of this caging up of the ladies has never been made quite clear, but the generally accepted explanation is that the full and unrestricted glare of feminine charms in the gallery behind the Speaker's chair, to which all eyes are necessarily turned, would dazzle impressionable Members and distract them from the business in hand.

Instigated, doubtless, by feminine complaint, many objections have been taken by the Members of the House to the retention of the grating, but the conservative *vis inertia* which in the House of Commons opposes

itself to all change, reasonable or unreasonable, has prevailed.

I remember on one occasion, instigated by a charming young lady, I questioned Mr. Herbert Gladstone, then President of the Board of Public Works, on the subject across the floor of the House. With deprecating eye cast sideways towards the Ladies' Gallery, Mr. Gladstone regretted his inability to have the grating removed. When I met him afterwards in the smoking-room he protested against the invidious position in which my question had placed him, and volunteered as a compromise to provide me with a pickaxe and crowbar and every facility for removing it myself.

Before I pass from the subject of the grating, there is one little curious incident that I desire to recall. Standing at the door of the House one day, I noticed that a small patch of the lattice-work of dull brass shone like burnished gold. Some time afterwards I asked an attendant if he could explain the reason.

"That," said he, "is the place where Mrs. Gladstone sits to watch the Grand Old Man whenever he has a big speech to make. She rests one hand on the grating and the friction, as you see, has worn it bright."

Often afterwards, from the floor of the House, when the old man was speaking, I watched the eager face of his wife in her accustomed place close to the grille with one hand resting lightly on the grating.

There seemed to me something wonderfully touching in love that survives through more than half a century :—

> That feeling that after long years have gone by
> Remains like a portrait we've sat for in youth;
> What e'en though the flush of the colours may fly,
> The features still live in their first smiling youth.

Indeed, the one fault I have to find with Viscount Morley's Life of Gladstone, is that Mrs. Gladstone fills so small a place in the work, when in the real life she filled so large. Old Boswell would have been more human and more gallant.

Uncomfortable as is the Ladies' Gallery, the competition for seats, especially on a gala night, is wonderfully keen

Each Member is (or was, before the coming of the suffragettes) permitted to put a little folded docket containing his name into a ballot-box, entitling him to two seats in the Ladies' Gallery. The papers are drawn by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and places are allotted in order of precedence to the successful balloters.

I remember a schoolboy trick of ours was to fold up the ballot papers with as many angles and corners as possible in hopes that it might arrest the finger-tips of the impartial Serjeant-at-Arms.

The popularity of the Ladies' Gallery was largely due to the fact that a seat there almost invariably involved in the summer-time a tea on the Terrace—one of the most delightful and popular of the social functions of London.

The Terrace of the House of Commons is, as everybody, or nearly everybody, knows, a vast platform stretching along the Thames, where pleasure-boats and barges go gliding slowly by.

The invasion of the Terrace by ladies is a modern development, to which some crusty old bachelors of the House at first strongly objected. To meet their objection a small, railed-off portion was reserved for " gentlemen only " ; but the ridicule they encountered when they sought the seclusion of this pen soon led to its removal, and the whole Terrace became the happy hunting-ground of the ladies.

In the season it was crowded with the rank and fashion of London, the whole space dotted over with tables on which tea, coffee and strawberries were liberally provided. Occasionally, too, ladies dined with Members in specially reserved rooms, but the rooms so reserved were amongst the smallest and dingiest of the building and were bespoken a week in advance.

Still, a dinner in the House of Commons was, in spite of all these difficulties and discomforts, or perhaps because of them, a coveted dissipation.

Among many disabilities the ladies had, however, one exclusive privilege. Beside the inner door of the Legislative Chamber there is a nook of about two feet high which looks in through a glass window upon the Members. Ladies,

accompanied by a Member, were privileged to stand there for a couple of minutes at a time and have a clear view of the Chamber and its occupants, which was impossible from the Ladies' Gallery. This was a privilege to which no male outsider was allowed.

I believe the freaks of the suffragettes have caused it to be wholly abolished. After an ultra-enthusiast had taken advantage of the opportunity to burst through the swinging doors and race up the floor of the House shouting, " Votes for Women ! " the Speaker decided he would take no risks for the future.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TERRORS OF THE HOUSE

A maiden speech—Called to order—Chamberlain and the Lords—Queen Anne and Queen Victoria—A misconception—An unparalleled scene—Herod and Judas—The fight on the floor—A general scrimmage—Members come to fisticuffs—The beginning of the end.

VERY terrifying is the atmosphere of the Legislative Chamber to a new Member. It inspires a strange feeling of awe from which even the most audacious is not exempt. I have heard that Mr. Healy, when little more than a boy, on his very first night in the House, attacked Lord Hartington in a speech of superb vituperation. But he was the single splendid exception. The antiquity of the House of Commons, the splendour of its traditions, the power of which it is the repository, completely overawes the novice. He enters with fear and trembling, he shrinks from notice, he trembles at the sound of his own voice. This I take it is the cause why so many great orators break down in their maiden speeches. For the first few weeks a little nervous shiver ran down my back as I stole to my seat, and the mere thought of speaking took my breath away.

My own voice had a strange hollow sound when I asked my first question in the historic Chamber. But I resolved to speak, and did early in the session, though it must be confessed that my maiden speech was a most embarrassing and disappointing performance. I carefully got my thoughts together, but having a speech ready and being let fire it off are two different things in the House of Commons. Half a dozen times one evening I popped up, hat in hand, to catch the Speaker's eye, and each time, in cricket parlance, I muffed the catch. I had an uneasy feeling of the comicality of the performance, and had almost determined to give up when my chance came at last. The Speaker sang out my

name in resonant tones. My heart gave a great throb and then ceased beating as I rose to address the House.

"Mr. Speaker," I began in the orthodox form, and was astounded by a sudden interruption.

"Order, order," cried the Speaker, and skipping out of his chair departed for his tea. Then the House emptied rapidly, and I was left waiting alone in a very fever of nervousness for the Speaker's return. The clock itself seemed to have taken an interval for refreshment, for the next twenty minutes, to my impatient imagination, slowly stretched out to two hours. At last the Speaker returned, but only the Speaker, misguided Members preferred their dinners to my oratory, so my maiden speech was delivered to the Chair, the Serjeant-at-Arms and a wilderness of empty green benches; my jokes fell flat on irresponsive vacancy, and my careful peroration turned to pure burlesque.

As a novice I naturally flew at high game. Mr. Chamberlain was then the pet aversion of the whole Irish party, and against Mr. Chamberlain my maiden speech was directed. I made fun of his declaration just before the General Election that Home Rule was as dead as Queen Anne. I was surprised, I said, that the right honourable gentleman thought it worth his while to take part in the debate. If Home Rule was as dead as Queen Anne, there was nothing to be gained by its dissection. But I rather thought that he and other Unionists would find, in the words of the immortal Mantalini, that Home Rule was "a demmed uncomfortable corpse." If Queen Anne was as much alive as Home Rule was, it would be a blue look-out for her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. I quoted Goldsmith at portentous length to illustrate his relations with Mr. Gladstone:—

The dog and man at first were friends,
  But then a pique began.
The dog to gain some private ends
  Went mad and bit the man.
But soon a wonder came to light,
  To show the rogues they lied.
The man recovered from the bite,
  The dog it was that died.

Finally I had the almost unique, if unenviable, experience of being called to order by the Speaker in my maiden speech. I repeated Mr. Chamberlain's description of the House of Lords, in what he afterwards called " his Radical days."

" I am rather thankful than otherwise to gentlemen who will take the trouble of wearing robes and coronets and keeping up a certain state of splendour which is pleasing to look on. They are ancient monuments, and I for one would be very sorry to deface them. But I do not admit that we can build on those interesting ruins the foundation of our government. I cannot allow these venerable antiquities——"

Here the Speaker pulled me up abruptly, but I had the satisfaction of explaining that the words objected to were Mr. Chamberlain's, not mine, and I was quite content when he retorted that they were not words that could be used in the House of Commons.

There was a curious sequel to my allusion to Queen Anne and Queen Victoria. Next night a card was sent to me, and in the Lobby I was greeted by a handsome and superbly groomed young man, who explained that he was the Hon. Secretary of the " White Rose League," and claimed me as an adherent of the Stuart queen.

Once I had got my maiden speech off my chest my nervousness rapidly vanished. Familiarity with the House of Commons if it did not breed contempt, at least dissipated terror. I learned to loll at my ease on the sacred green benches, I no longer trembled at the sound of my own voice, and found it an easy matter to chip into a debate whenever I felt so inclined.

It was my good (or bad) fortune to be present at the wildest scene, and the fiercest, ever witnessed in the House of Commons since the day when Cromwell with his Ironsides broke into the Legislative Chamber, scoffed at Sir Harry Vane and ordered the soldiers to " remove that bauble "—meaning thereby the venerated mace.

It was the night when Mr. Gladstone had determined to cut his way through a mass of dilatory amendments to the third reading of his Home Rule Bill. For many months

the measure had been openly and systematically obstructed by the Opposition with an infinite number of devices. Finally Mr. Gladstone preferred his indictment against obstruction, and it was sentenced to the guillotine. When the fateful night of the execution arrived the air of the place seemed electric with the passions which had been aroused. Once again the House was crammed to its utmost capacity, seats were engaged twelve hours in advance, and for the unwise legislators who had not taken their precautions beforehand, only standing room was available; benches, floors and galleries were all densely crowded.

The debate was animated from the first, but waxed in passion and fervour as it proceeded. Cheers and counter cheers roared across from the opposing benches like broadsides in a naval battle; hotter and hotter grew the temper of the House, while the hands of the clock crept slowly round to the fatal hour of twelve when the guillotine must fall.

In the very height of this seething excitement Mr. Chamberlain—slim, sleek and neatly groomed, with a star of white orchid in his buttonhole—rose to conclude the debate. His voice was smoothly modulated, his words carefully chosen, he spoke with precise deliberation, but there was a sting in every pointed sentence that pricked the fiery passion of the House like a spur to a high-mettled and over-excited steed. At last the climax came. With mockery and malice in his soft tones, he insinuated insulting comparisons between Mr. Gladstone and Herod, quoting the appalling description in the Scriptures of the downfall of the Jewish king.

At the first uttering of the word "Herod," the storm of passion broke loose among the followers of Mr. Gladstone, and the answering cry of "Judas! Judas!" came back from a score of voices hoarse with rage, the dominating tones of Mr. T. P. O'Conner heard plainly above the tumult. There followed a scene without parallel in the British House of Commons.

Mr. Chamberlain had plainly anticipated the storm. He reserved the attack on Mr. Gladstone to the peroration

of his speech, and just as the hour hand of the clock touched the allotted hour he dropped into his seat, smiling sardonically at the tumult he had evoked.

The Chairman of the House rose to put the question, in compliance with the motion already passed, but his feeble voice was drowned in the all-pervading din. On the Tory benches was seen the figure of Mr. Vicary Gibbs, bareheaded, waving both arms wildly and shouting in dumb show a frantic appeal to the Chair, but no word was heard. Mr. Vicary Gibbs dropped into his seat, clapped his hat on his head, as the quaint rule to which I have already alluded prescribes, and continued to yell an inaudible protest through the tumult. After the prescribed pause, the question was put again, as before, in dumb show and amid the continuing storm, and the House was directed to clear for a division.

At this the Tory fury broke out in open rebellion to the authority of the Chair. The members of the Opposition clung to their seats and yelled in frantic defiance. So far the violence was of voices only, but not for long. We who had passed out into the division lobbies in obedience to the direction of the Chair were recalled by the tumult in the Chamber, and trooped back to discover the cause. Close beside me at the time was a Liberal Home Rule Member, Mr. Logan, who like myself was surprised on his return to the House by the strange spectacle of the Tories still glued to their seats and yelling furiously. While I took my place among my colleagues, to wait results, Mr. Logan's curiosity drew him towards the centre of the excitement.

On the front Opposition benches, however, he was met by a furious cry of " Order ! order ! " for it is a technical disorder for any Member not addressing the Chair to keep his feet in the House of Commons except behind the Bar.

" I will put myself in order," he answered obligingly, and dropped down into the vacant seat of the Leader of the Opposition.

That was the signal for violence. The Tories flung themselves upon him in front and rear, and tried to hustle him from his place. Mr. Fisher (then private secretary to Mr. Balfour) was the most violent in the attack. The Irish

Members rose to a man at the sight of a scrimmage and moved in the direction, impelled so far rather by curiosity than by anger, but the pressure in the rear pushed those in front across the gangway into the Tory territory. The Tories leaped up to repel the boarders. Colonel Saunderson, with an Irishman's readiness for a fight, led the assault, and striking out fiercely with clenched fist met the unoffending Mr. Austin in the face.

The next moment Mr. Crean struck back as fiercely; the blow caught Colonel Saunderson under the jaw with a dull thud that resounded through the House and sent him sprawling among the benches. All at once the passion that lies in every man's heart—the wild, mad, animal passion of fight, which civilization may stifle but cannot extinguish—flared up in a fierce blaze. Staid legislators yelled and struck and fought like corner boys.

From the galleries the spectators, leaning forward, hissed furiously at the degrading scene.

The thing was so sudden that I found myself in the very heart and heat of this tumult before I could clearly realize what it all meant. But across the floor of the House, beyond the fierce mass of struggling men, I had a glimpse of the pale, pathetic face of Mr. Gladstone. Now, for the first time, he seemed old to me—old even beyond his age—and haggard with humiliation, for Mr. Gladstone loved the House of Commons, and its honour was dear to him as his own.

For a moment it seemed as if the whole assembly must be swept into the heart of that growing tumult. Strangely enough, it was on the Irish benches the peacemakers were found. I saw several men, whose passion made them irresponsible, held forcibly down by more peaceable colleagues. Two Irish Members stretched strong arms across the gangway between the Irish and Orange benches, and held the hereditary foes apart; but still the fight raged, though less fiercely, on the floor of the House, when all at once the rumbling tumult ceased in deadest silence and something like awe fell upon the assembly. I turned round, surprised and startled, to find the cause of this sudden peace, and

found it. The feeble Chairman of Committees had disappeared, and the stern Speaker of the House had come back into the Chair. Resolute and masterful his clear voice rang through the tumult, enforcing obedience. Explanations were made and apologies were offered. In ten minutes all traces of the unparalleled storm, which had for a brief space swept away its traditions, disappeared, and the House cleared for a division.

I remember well a little incident which occurred as I moved out with the rest. Excited and forgetful, by reason of the scene which I had witnessed, I unconsciously set my hat on my head before I reached the bar. Instantly a cry of " Order ! order ! " was raised by Members round me, and an attendant at my elbow whispered, " Remove your hat, sir, remove your hat," in a tone of horror as if a sacrilege had been committed in a sacred place. Then I knew for certain that ceremonial and convention had reasserted themselves, and the House of Commons was itself again.

After months of wearisome obstruction the great night came at last when the third reading of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was carried in the Imperial House of Commons.

All day there was a curious strain and restlessness that is ever the herald of a great event. An undercurrent of impatience ran through the applause with which the stirring speeches were heard. On the closing night of the great debate the highest flight of eloquence was reached, but even the highest eloquence could not hold the attention of the Members, who crowded the House from floor to ceiling, eager to come to close quarters in the division lobby.

At last the final struggle was over. The tellers, four abreast, pushed their way through the throng up the floor of the House of Commons and stood ranged in front of the Speaker's chair. It was a moment of the profoundest silence, the most intense excitement ; every man in the great assembly held his breath to listen ; all felt that a turning-point in the history of the two nations had been reached, and awaited with awe-inspired silence the verdict of the Imperial Parliament in favour of Ireland's freedom and nationality.

The instant the figures were announced the pent-up excitement broke loose. The hopes and longings of years were in the cheers that pealed again and again from the Irish benches, whilst the Unionists held their seats silent and dismayed.

Dizzy with delight and triumph I passed from the heat of the House into the cool night air. The excitement within had overflowed into the streets, a vast wild throng had gathered in Palace Yard waiting the verdict, and when the verdict came it evoked a universal enthusiasm. Englishmen and Irishmen grasped hands in fellowship and congratulation at the ending of the long feud of centuries. All at once someone in the crowd struck up "The Wearing of the Green," and it swelled up to the night skies in a mighty chorus in which the Cockney accent and the brogue were strangely blended. As I whirled homeward on my bicycle past Trafalgar Square I still heard the distant roar booming through the night air, and I felt that the solemn promise of that great night could never be effaced.

CHAPTER XXIII

FRONT BENCHERS

"The Grand Old Man"—Gladstone unrivalled—Universal genius—"All proud of him"—"Before he dies"—His sprint in the Lobby—Never an "orthodox Tory"—"The Slogger"—Lawyers and Members—Morley and Sir Henry James—Asquith—Lloyd George.

MY brief sojourn in the House of Commons has left me vivid recollections of many remarkable men. Amid those pictures Gladstone stands alone. It is hopeless to try to explain the fascination of the man. He towered over all the rest by head and shoulders; he was at once the youngest and the oldest member of Parliament: the oldest according to the deceptive testimony of the calendar, the youngest in an almost boyish eagerness and vivacity. You never knew the moment when he would start a brilliant surprise on the House. Sometimes he brightened the dull tedium of the dinner-hour with a brilliant flash of oratory that brought Members hurrying in from their half-finished meal; sometimes on an outside subject, raised on what I may call the "off nights" devoted to private Members, he appeared, radiant, with a red rose in his button-hole, to contribute a lively little speech to the enlivenment of a dry, academic debate.

He lent to the place the light and animation of genius, he provided the Members with a succession of brilliant surprises. In every form of parliamentary service he was not merely great, but the greatest. Of his eloquence there is no need to speak. In a set speech he was absolutely overpowering, obstacles and opposition melted away before that full torrent of close reasoning and irresistible appeal. But in answering a question across the floor of the House, in a quick interruption, in untying a parliamentary knot, in chaffing a prosy speaker, in recovering a reverse in debate,

and turning a defeat into victory, the adroitness of the old parliamentary hand was supreme.

I have heard it said that Gladstone had no sense of humour; my experience gives the lie to that calumny. I never heard anything more delicately humorous than his playful badinage of Mr. Jesse Collings, or more caustically humorous than his trenchant attacks on Mr. Chamberlain.

His adroitness in debate was almost miraculous. Once in his absence the ministerial benches got into a muddle over an amendment proposed by the Opposition. The amendment was one that should have been accepted at the first, but the Government, having once committed themselves to refusal, doggedly persisted in opposing it.

Mr. Sexton, in a brief speech, tried to help them out of the slough into which they had plunged, but they would not be helped, and they were still floundering when Mr. Gladstone came suddenly on the scene and plumped down in his usual place between Mr. Morley and Sir William Harcourt. From my seat on the other side of the House I saw him rapidly collect, apparently from both men at the same time, a brief summary of what had gone on in his absence.

It took him no more than three minutes to grasp the situation, and when Mr. Balfour sat down after an extremely effective speech, in which he had bantered the Ministers to his heart's content, Mr. Gladstone rose to reply.

He began with a brilliant attack on the Opposition, ridiculing the speakers and speeches on the other side. He declared that Mr. Balfour had "envenomed the debate." Then under cover of this attack he proceeded to change the position of the Government. He paid a graceful compliment to Mr. Sexton.

"I myself," he said, "have been much influenced in my judgment by the speech of the honourable Member for Kerry." Thereupon the Opposition shouted their derision.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Gladstone indignantly, "will you not allow me to be influenced by an Irish Member, even when he influences me in favour of your own contention? You yourselves, I notice, are sometimes influenced

by the right honourable Member for West Birmingham. Not, I would assume, from any inveterate love of the individual."

The shot went home, for at that time Mr. Chamberlain was not popular on the Tory benches, and amidst the laughter that followed Mr. Gladstone carried the Government safe out of their untenable position, with drums beating and banners flying, and with such brilliant assumption of triumph that the retreat seemed a victory, and Members of both sides of the House applauded the tactics of the veteran.

"Tell the Grand Old Man," I heard Mr. Balfour say when he met Mr. Morley behind the Speaker's chair after the division, "tell him from me that we are all proud of him."

An interruption is often most effective in the House of Commons, though a quick-witted speaker will occasionally counter the interruption with a deadly retort. The most effective thing of the kind that I remember during my experience was Mr. Gladstone's interruption of Mr. Chamberlain.

It is the practice of the House of Commons that the speaker shall allude to the Members who agree with him as his "honourable, or right honourable, friends," and the Members who differ from him as the "honourable, or right honourable, gentlemen."

At the time Mr. Chamberlain was in a somewhat difficult position; he had practically left the Liberal party, but he had not joined the Tories. The Liberals were his "right honourable friends," because he was still nominally of their party; the Tories were his "right honourable friends," because he was acting and speaking with them. The result was confusing. His speech, whether in reply or approval, was interlarded with allusions to "his right honourable friends" on both sides of the House. "I approve of my honourable friend's views," he would say in one sentence, and "I repudiate my right honourable friend's views," he would say in the next.

Mr. Gladstone saw his opportunity. Suddenly jumping

to his feet with an air of eager but innocent curiosity, he exclaimed :

" Which of his right honourable friends does he allude to ? The right honourable gentleman has so many."

A roar of applause completely disorganized Mr. Chamberlain. The sting of the interruption lay in the fact that he had at the time hardly a friend on either side of the House.

Mr. Gladstone's venerable youth was a subject of constant comment in the tea-rooms, smoking-room and lobbies of the House. It used to be jokingly observed that he had succeeded in turning the corner, that he was coming back the other way, and that in fifty or sixty years more he would be at Eton, playing cricket with the great-grandsons of his contemporaries.

One story, I remember, was told of a neat retort by a Liberal Member to Mr. Herbert Gladstone, to whom he applied for a ticket to the House.

" I am anxious," said the Member, " to bring my boy, who is home for the holidays, to hear Mr. Gladstone's great speech. I should specially wish him to hear Mr. Gladstone before he dies."

Thereupon Mr. Herbert Gladstone retorted somewhat hotly, that his father had no notion of dying just yet.

" Of course, I know that," said the Liberal blandly, " I know that your father will never die. When I said that I wanted my boy to hear him before he died, it was, of course, to my boy's death I alluded."

Two illustrations of that wonderful vitality and vivacity are present to my recollection. Mr. Gladstone never shirked the monotonous labour of the division lobby. I have seen him in the small hours of the morning, time after time, march with shoulders square and head erect through division after division. Nor was this all ; while others loitered in the lobby Mr. Gladstone seized every spare moment for work.

In various nooks in the division lobbies of the House of Commons are set a number of writing-tables on which a letter may be dashed off while you wait, and no one utilized those tables so arduously as Mr. Gladstone. On the occasion I have in mind, he had got to a table almost at the end of

the lobby furthest from the exit, and was instantly immersed in his correspondence. The lobby emptied more rapidly than usual. The tellers, who stand at the exit door counting their flock as they pass, and hurrying up the stragglers, grew impatient. "Door, door!" they cried, which is the House of Commons' equivalent for "hurry up."

I saw Mr. Gladstone, as the sound reached his ears, leap from his seat, gather his letters hastily into a writing-case, and go racing up the whole length of the lobby with head erect and elbows well tucked in to his sides like an athlete on the track. I passed him again just as he entered the House, and he was not even breathed by his sprint. When this happened he was well over eighty years of age.

On another occasion, I remember, long after midnight, there was a tremendous crush in the division lobby, while the Members dribbled slowly, one by one, through the turnstile. At the outskirts of the congested district was Mr. Gladstone, patiently waiting his turn with the rest. I contrived to secure a chair, which I offered him, but he put it aside with a gracious gesture.

"No, no," he said smilingly, "it would never do for me to turn obstructionist."

When Mr. Gladstone retired, the light of genius was quenched in the House of Commons, and its chief charm departed. We had many able, many eloquent, many brilliant men remaining, but no second Gladstone.

The dull round of commonplace debate became duller than ever; there was no longer the hope of one of his brilliant flashes of genius to redeem it.

Mr. Gladstone honoured me personally with much kindness, and I occasionally heard from him after he retired, in the form of correspondence he most affected—the post card. In too flattering terms he accorded me permission to dedicate my story, "Lord Edward FitzGerald," to him, as the "best English friend Ireland has ever had."

I had some letters and many post cards while we were in the House together, and afterwards. The following contain, so far as I am aware, his latest declarations in favour of Home Rule for Ireland:—

" SIR,

" I return my best thanks for your note and kind gift. They will, I hope, form a new incitement to preserving effort in a cause which I believe to be one of justice, peace and all happy results for every one affected by it.

" I remain your very faithful and obedient

" W. GLADSTONE. *June* 26, '90."

" MY DEAR SIR,

" One word to offer thanks for the volume I had just received, and to assure you that my opinions and feelings with regard to the history and the future of Ireland remain totally unchanged.

" Yours faithfully,

" W. GLADSTONE. *July* 16, '96."

So much has been said and written about Gladstone's change of politics, that it is interesting to learn from himself that he never was an " orthodox Tory."

" SIR,

" I thank you sincerely for your letter and enclosure. Undoubtedly in 1832 I was an earnest Tory. An orthodox Tory I fear I never was.

" Your faithful and obedient

" W. GLADSTONE. *April* 12, '87."

Mr. Gladstone's first lieutenant, Sir William Harcourt, was one of the great figures in the House impossible to ignore or forget. A kindly natured man, but a fine fighter, Sir William was the " Dugald Dalgetty " of party politics. He followed his leader in sheer loyalty through all the strain and stress of the Home Rule Campaign. But though it may be that the personal authority of Mr. Gladstone helped to convince him of the necessity for Home Rule, his conviction was none the less sincere. He has been called " The Slogger " of debate. His retorts were like the stroke of a broadsword, not evading, but breaking down the guards of his opponents. His invective went home like the straight-from-the-shoulder blow of a skilled pugilist.

I have him now in my mind as I write, towering in pride of place beside Mr. Gladstone on the Government benches; he holds in his hand a number of sheets of paper from which he reads his speech, verbatim as he speaks it, but there was never before a man who could so thoroughly give to a written speech the freedom, force and verve of an extemporary oration. When he flung out a brilliant taunt or a crushing argument at the Opposition benches, he invariably turned round in a half-circle to face the loyal ranks behind him in quest of that storm of applause that never failed to greet his oratorical triumphs.

Of quite a different style, but to my thinking even a finer debater, was Mr. Asquith. He was of Mr. Chamberlain's school, and Chamberlain at his very best was no match for Asquith at his best. In the keen conflict of debate his intellectual sword-play was quiet, but deadly, and he turned the blade in the wound.

I remember one occasion on which he followed and answered Mr. Chamberlain in a speech of overruling force. "The right honourable Member for West Birmingham has been torpedoed by my right honourable friend," was Sir William Harcourt's description of the result.

It is curious how often a man who is supreme in the law courts cuts a comparatively poor figure in the House of Commons. Erskine has often been cited as an example; Sir Charles Russell was another. Mr. Healy was an apparent exception to the rule, but he began by a parliamentary training, he was a Member first and a lawyer afterwards. The traditions and restrictions of the legal training, the anomalies of the laws of evidence hamper the parliamentary orator.

A great Irish Equity lawyer, after his first experience of the House of Commons, complained that a Member of Parliament was allowed to read to the House a letter which was not verified by an affidavit.

I had heard Sir Charles Russell in the Parnell Commission before I heard him from the Government benches. He absolutely dominated the Court, judges and all. His supremacy was born witness to by the greatest of his rivals.

Sir Charles had dropped some paper, and flurried and excited was looking for it on his desk. Sir Henry James, who sat beside him, stooped down and lifted the paper from the floor and handed it back to his famous opponent.

"Thank you, thank you," cried Sir Charles, "but where did you find it?"

"Where we all are, Sir Charles," replied the courtly Sir Henry, "at your feet."

Keen, powerful, dominating, Russell, Q.C., was a very different person from mild, deprecating and somewhat ineffective Russell, M.P. In the same way Sir Henry James in the House of Commons was but a faint reflection of Sir Henry James of the law courts. He affected in Parliament an air of extreme respectability which earned for him the name of prig, and made him the target of many stinging jibes from Mr. Labouchere. Next to Lord Curzon he was the most "superior person" in that democratic assembly.

His well-turned homilies are best remembered by a brilliant epigram which one of them extorted from Mr. Morley. Sir Henry had lectured the House of Commons, and chiefly the Home Rule Government, from the inaccessible altitude of his own lofty morality, and Mr. Morley rose to reply.

"The right honourable gentleman," he said, "has treated the House to a speech which is an admirable combination of the forum, the pulpit and the stage."

The scandalized indignation of Sir Henry James at this sacrilege intensified the amusement of the audience.

As a rule, however, Mr. Morley, second only on the platform to Mr. Gladstone himself, was not effective in the House of Commons. The atmosphere seemed to unnerve him, he was hesitating, timid and too prone to make concessions to his opponents.

While I was a Member of Parliament my services on the platform were frequently requisitioned by British Home Rulers, and everywhere I spoke I found a sympathetic and encouraging audience, with whom a little humour went a long way, and who were always most generous with the orator's wages—laughter and cheers. My stock argument

that Home Rule meant the bringing of friendship between the two countries never failed to awaken their enthusiasm.

Once I attended with the then Mr. Sydney Buxton, lately ennobled, a meeting of his constituents in London. On the way to the meeting he warned me against disappointment at the apathy with which he expected the subject of Home Rule would be received. On the way back he confessed that Home Rule was the only topic that had really stirred the enthusiasm of his constituents.

I had a very amusing experience at a Woman's Rights meeting in Swansea. The two resolutions were Home Rule and Votes for Women. When Home Rule was safely carried I expressed some doubts about the propriety of votes for women, and all the lady orators wasted their speeches in a good-humoured attempt to convert me, while the men in the audience enjoyed the joke. What, I wonder, would be the fate of a man who would dare attempt such a thing now at a meeting of two thousand suffragettes?

My constant companion on those missionary meetings was a brilliant young Welshman, who discoursed about Welsh Disestablishment as I about Home Rule, and who specially prided himself on being a Celt. Even in those days I was charmed by his brilliant and persuasive eloquence. His name was Lloyd George.

CHAPTER XXIV

PORTRAITS FROM MEMORY

An eccentric Solicitor-General—Briar pipe, coatless and hatless—Labouchere—"A matter of conscience"—Balfour, his fascination—Chamberlain and Son—Gladstone's compliment—McNeill's interruption, "Send for Joe!"—Sexton—O'Brien—Dillon—Blake—Davitt—"The way to the Bench not through the dock"—Tim Healy—An effective intervention—"Hicary Vicary Gibbs."—T. P. O'Connor, as a speaker, as a golfer—Justin McCarthy—Out.

THE Solicitor-General in Gladstone's last Government was Mr. Ridley, a great Equity lawyer with a very rotund figure and a curious sing-song intonation. It was thought great sport for young Tory bloods to bait this uncouth Solicitor-General, and whenever there was a lull in the debate they called out: "Ridley! Ridley!" But after a few sharp lessons they learned that that game did not pay: they got too much of Ridley. Instead of addressing the House in the usual way from his seat, it was his custom to lumber slowly out on the floor, and with his stomach against the table and his face directly facing the Speaker, he addressed him as if he was a judge in a law court. But he always spoke with homely sense and cogency, and soundly trounced his unruly interrupters. On one occasion as he lumbered into his accustomed place, a much-worn briar pipe dropped from his hand or his pocket and bobbed along the floor amid the uproarious laughter of the House, whom a small thing mightily amuses. In no way disconcerted, he picked it up, restored it to his pocket and coolly proceeded with his speech. Curiously enough, this little incident established him as a prime favourite.

In my life I never met a man so indifferent as he was to appearances and conventions. One Sunday forenoon we went out together to dine and spend the Sunday with a colleague, Mr. Cobb, M.P., who had a very pretty place at

Harrow. Elaborate arrangements had been made to have a fly at the station to meet the Solicitor-General. But we came out through the wrong door. There was no fly waiting, and we had to walk a good mile up a steep hill to our destination. It was a blazing hot forenoon, and the stout Solicitor-General puffed and panted as he toiled up the hill while all the beauty and fashion of Harrow went by to church. Presently, to my amazement, he stopped and pulled off his frock-coat and folded it. Then, in his shirt-sleeves, with his top-hat in his right hand and his frock-coat over his left arm, the Solicitor-General for England pursued his way unabashed amid the fashionable throng. On our arrival he and his host had a violent altercation on the " fly " question, which they settled amicably over a quart of shandygaff.

One of my pleasantest recollections of the House is associated with Mr. Labouchere. In the dull routine of business one got to long for amusement as the traveller in the desert longs for water. Mr. Labouchere was always amusing, with that curious cynical humour of his own. I am inclined to think that if he had been less amusing he would have been more successful, and that that cynical humour of his was the chief barrier against his entrance to the Cabinet.

He loved a piece of mischief like a schoolboy. One story I remember well which fairly indicates his tactics. He had a motion down for an amendment on the Address condemning the House of Lords. The Government opposed the amendment. Mr. Tom Ellis, who had just succeeded Mr. Majoribanks to the position of Chief Liberal Whip, interviewed Mr. Labouchere on the subject. But Mr. Labouchere persisted, and carried his motion in a half-empty house, and I heard him afterwards in the smoke-room detail the secret of his success.

" Ellis," he said, " came to me to ask me how many speakers I had, how many promised to vote, and how long the debate would be likely to last. I told him I had few supporters, but they would all speak, and the debate would probably last some hours. He believed me, and let his men

go. Five minutes afterwards I took a division and defeated the Government.

"I am sorry for Ellis," said Mr. Labouchere reflectively; "he is a decent fellow, and it may get him into trouble; but on a question of principle like this one must be ready to sacrifice one's own father. If Majoribanks were there," he added plaintively, "I could not have done it, for Majoribanks would not have believed a single word I said."

I entered the House with a very bitter personal dislike of Mr. Arthur Balfour, whom to that hour I had never seen. Before I was a week there I found myself constantly struggling against the inclination to like him. His voice was so pleasant, his smile so captivating, his manner so charming, that I had constantly to recall the incidents of the Coercion regime, which he personally conducted in Ireland, in order to arm myself against his fascination.

In startling contrast to Mr. Balfour was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, whom Irishmen found it quite easy and natural to dislike. Yet it is hard to describe the repellent influence he exercised. There was something in his alert self-assurance, in his caustic speech, that grated on his hearers, even when the brilliancy of the speech itself—its logical arguments and effective sarcasm—compelled admiration. The hostility which Mr. Chamberlain provoked was reflected in milder form on his son, who revolved about him as a satellite round a sun.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain, as I remember him, was a handsome, floridly dressed young person, who in the dog days wore a cummerbund of more than Oriental splendour, and whose delight it was, literally and figuratively, to sit at the feet of his father on the Cross-benches and punctuate his remarks with enthusiastic applause.

This same young gentleman was the centre of an affecting scene when he made his maiden speech in the House. The speech itself was a poor affair enough, correct, but commonplace in style and argument, and delivered in a somewhat exaggerated parody of his father's voice and manner. The elder Mr. Chamberlain was horribly uneasy while the younger Mr. Chamberlain was on his legs, and his

uneasiness was intensified when at the close of Master Austen's speech Mr. Gladstone rose.

To everyone in the House it was plain that Mr. Chamberlain had expected a specimen of the genial and dexterous ridicule of which the Grand Old Man was past master. The opportunity was tempting—Mr. Chamberlain probably knew that under similar circumstances he himself would not have resisted it. But the Grand Old Man was made of different material. He pronounced a delicate eulogium on the speech, kindly, graceful and considerate, with just here and there a touch of judicious flattery. He ended with a generous compliment to the young orator, whose success in his maiden effort could not fail to be " dear to the heart of a father."

While Mr. Gladstone's speech was in progress all eyes were turned on Mr. Chamberlain, and, to his credit be it said, he was visibly and deeply affected by the generosity of Mr. Gladstone.

Before I am done with Mr. Chamberlain let me mention one most amusing incident, of which Mr. Swift MacNeill, M.P., was the hero. Mr. Chamberlain was moving a vote of censure on the Government. He read a ponderous indictment with grave solemnity, dwelling on the several crimes and misdemeanours of the Ministers until he came to his peroration. " We therefore," he went on, " respectfully advise Her Most Gracious Majesty to——"

" Send for Joe ! " shouted Mr. MacNeill in the middle of the sentence.

The House exploded in a roar of laughter, in which Mr. Chamberlain, inaudible and indignant, resumed his seat.

Though Mr. Justin McCarthy was Chairman of the Irish party, Mr. Sexton, as his first lieutenant, generally took the lead in the House of Commons. As a speaker he was generally regarded as second only to Mr. Gladstone. I remember Sir George Trevelyan, returning from a meeting, told me that this was the opinion of the Speaker, Peel, and that he himself thoroughly shared the same view.

Two parliamentary exploits of Mr. Sexton live very distinctly in my remembrance. The first was the dressing he

administered to the present Lord Selborne for some insulting allusion to the Irish party. His victim sat sulkily silent with bowed head and flushed face under the torrent of fiery invective, and at the close was constrained to make, with manifest reluctance, an ungracious apology.

On the other occasion Mr. Sexton was the central figure of an incident that went near to disrupting the alliance between the Liberal and the Irish National parties. Mr. St. John Brodrick, now Lord Midleton, in an insulting speech described the Irish as " a garrulous and impecunious race." Mr. Sexton, in reply, characterized the observation as " impertinent." At the instance of Mr. Balfour the timid Chairman of Committee, Mr. Millar, ruled Mr. Sexton's language was unparliamentary, and called on him to withdraw. The ruling was plainly absurd; everyone in the House knew it to be absurd, and Mr. Sexton refused to obey it.

Then followed a scene of tremendous excitement. Mr. Balfour saw his advantage and pressed it home. If the House divided on the question of Mr. Sexton's expulsion for refusing to obey the Chairman's ruling, the Liberal party would either be compelled to vote for it against their view and inclination, or to administer a snub to their own recently appointed chairman, which would compel his instant resignation. Mr. Gladstone saved the situation by a personal appeal to Mr. Sexton.

Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon spoke very seldom in those days, and when they did speak they were listened to with the attention which earnestness always commands in that assembly.

The House of Commons is, however, jealous of a reputation elsewhere acquired. The Honble. Mr. Edward Blake came there from Canada, where he was the leader of the Liberal party and reputed the most eloquent man in the Dominion. But he never found his feet in the House of Commons. His stately and florid style was not relished by an assembly which is intolerant of any " eloquence " except of the very highest order, and which believes with Horace, " *si paulo a summo decessit vergit ad immum.*"

On the other hand, the maiden speech of Mr. Michael Davitt was an immediate success. Its unaffected simplicity captured instant approval, for there is nothing the House hates like affectation. The speech contained one very happy allusion. The previous evening Mr. Barton, now Mr. Justice Barton, the most kindly and gentle of men, had, in an earnest and eloquent speech, gravely informed the astonished House that in certain eventualities he would take a place beside the rioters in the streets of Belfast.

Mr. Davitt smilingly rebuked the honourable and learned member for this indiscretion. "The way to the Bench in Ireland," he assured him, "is not through the dock."

The maiden speech was remarkable for another and somewhat sensational episode. While Davitt was speaking a Tory Member hissed out the word "Murderer!" He was instantly brought to book by an Irish Member, and after the lame excuse that he had not meant the insult to be heard, he was compelled to make abject apology.

Mr. Healy's impish humour made him an immense favourite, and the House was instantly crowded to the doors when he rose with Members who came to be amused or convinced. Most effective was his performance on the first night of the guillotine.

The Unionists were furious at the suggestion of closure by departments as the answer to obstruction, and had stage-managed a sensational effect in which the chief rôle was to be played by Mr. Balfour as leader of the Opposition. It was arranged the guillotine should first fall upon him, an indignant martyr to the cause of free speech. But this fine stage effect was spoiled by Mr. Healy, who contrived to catch the Speaker's eye just before Mr. Balfour rose and began a speech of delightful humour. For a time the Unionists enjoyed it, and laughed with the rest at his cynical sallies. But presently it dawned on them that Mr. Balfour was to be robbed of his opportunity of indignant protest, and they began to shout, "'Vide, 'Vide!"

Mr. Healy begged them not to be impatient; he entreated them to respect the liberty of debate. The division, he assured them, would come soon enough. The climax was

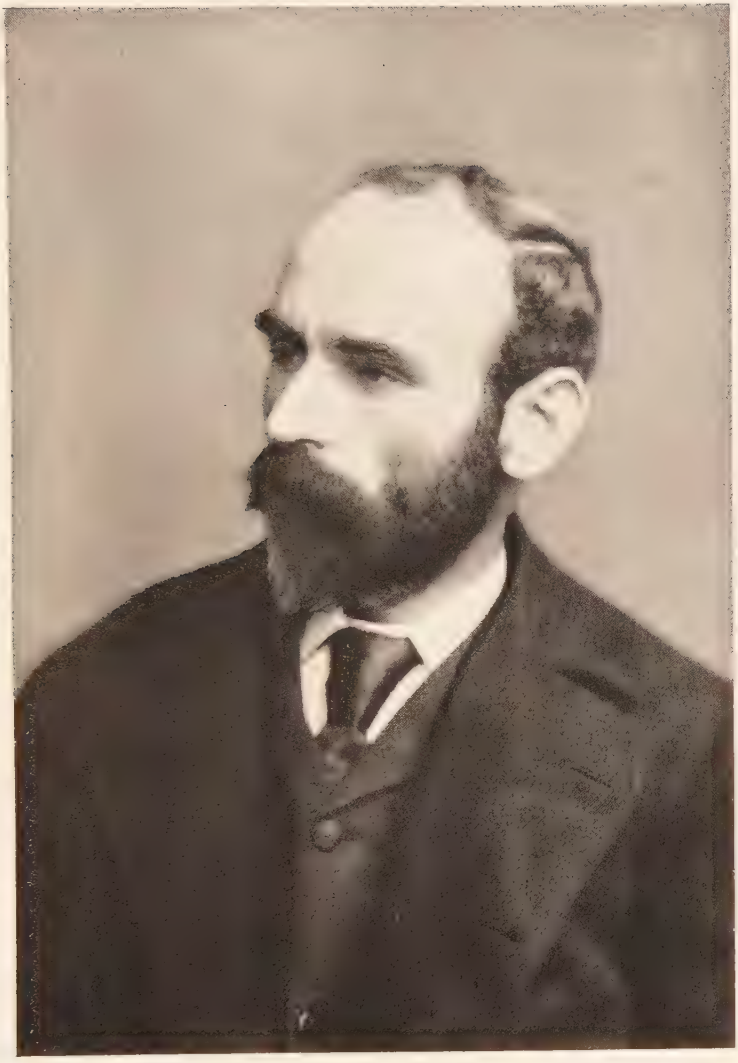

Photo by William Lawrence, Dublin.

MICHAEL DAVITT

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reached when Mr. William Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, jumped up from the Unionist side to move the very closure which Mr. Balfour had got ready to denounce.

All the stuffing was knocked out of the protest against the guillotine. "You surpassed yourself to-night, Healy," I heard Sir William Harcourt whisper as they passed through the division lobby together.

The House was, indeed, a big playground for Mr. Healy, in which he loved to disport himself. His humour had a pungent flavour that was always keenly appreciated. On one occasion as Mr. Harry Forster, who had just distinguished himself by his manipulation in the City of "Warner's Safe Cure," which had just been floated as a joint-stock company, was addressing the House in an irrelevant speech, Mr. Healy kept up a constant interruption of "Warner, Warner, Warner!" bobbing up and down on his seat with the glee of a mischievous schoolboy. To the Speaker and those a little distance away the interruption sounded like "Order, order, order!" But there was a ripple of laughter round the unfortunate Harry Forster, who daren't protest. Again the climax was reached by Mr. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, in whose madness there was method, and sometimes a spice of malice as well. Gravely rising to a point of order, he called the attention of the Speaker to the obnoxious word, and so let the whole House into the joke.

Mr. Healy objected to the name Higgenbottom, which belonged to a much respected parliamentary reporter. "If I'd a name like that," he said to me, "I'd kick the bottom off it."

Another name which amused him hugely was "Vicary Gibbs." Once, when Mr. Gibbs was speaking, Healy nearly knocked him out of time by a sudden interruption. Then I saw him scribbling delightedly on a scrap of paper, which he handed down to me, and I read :—

Hicary Vicary Gibbs,
A mouse ran up his ribs,
His ribs were bare
And he got a great scare,
Hicary Vicary Gibbs.

One of the most popular of all the Irish Members with all classes and conditions of men was T. P. O'Connor. As he walked down the Terrace everyone he met, men and women, wanted a word with him. There were few more effective speakers in the House of Commons, and no more effective speaker on the platform. He was constantly beset by Members with doubtful seats beseeching him to speak in their constituencies. I have heard T. P. O'Connor's devotion to Home Rule questioned, but surely he has given ample proof of that devotion. If he had chosen to cut himself loose from the Irish party, he might easily have secured any seat he desired in the British Cabinet.

Socially he was a most delightful companion, with the frank good-humour of a big child. Occasionally he stayed with me when he visited Dublin, and never was there a more delightful guest. It was characteristic of the man that never having cared in the least for outdoor sports, he should in middle age take to golf with the absorbing enthusiasm of a boy. In an article in *Fry's Magazine* I once described him as the keenest golfer and the worst I had ever known, and he cheerfully accepted the description. Five yards added to his fifty yards drive was a matter of jubilation. Once, when we were playing a foursome at Dollymount, he contrived to hole out a long putt.

"T.P.," I asked, "did any political triumph ever give you such satisfaction?"

"Never!" he cried enthusiastically. "I swear it, never!"

It is one of the proudest privileges of my life to be able to claim as friend the gentle, kindly and courteous man who was my leader in the House of Commons. The word genial, in its fullest and warmest meaning, fitted Mr. Justin McCarthy like a glove. I never knew another man so kindly natured—"a most untiring friend in doing courtesies." It has been said somewhere that no one is worth anything who has no enemies. Mr. McCarthy gives the lie to that harsh saying: no one could be at enmity with him. Though he never shirked a duty or compromised a principle, though he spoke his mind freely when plain

speaking was called for, he was, I believe, the most universally popular of men. I remember once seeing the prospectus of a famous American literary club of which in their time Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, and indeed all the lights of American literature, were prominent members. The prospectus contained all the names of the presidents, vice-presidents and members of this club. There was a single page reserved for "honorary members," and in the centre of that white page there was one name "Justin McCarthy."

Yet Mr. McCarthy was, if possible, more modest than he was popular. He was entirely devoid of self-consciousness. Very early in our acquaintance, when I still looked up to him with something of awe, he asked me why I addressed him as Mr. McCarthy. I stammered some kind of explanation.

"Don't do it again," he warned me genially. "Call me Justin; I am always Justin to my friends."

I am glad to believe that our friendship grew and waxed strong during those three or four years of parliamentary hard labour.

There was a bond between us in the fact that we were both engaged in active journalistic work at the time. How well I remember his sympathetic smile as we stole off together reluctantly from the smoking-room to the quieter galleries of the House, where we could make copy in peace.

"Going to get ready my shower of frogs," was his phrase for the writing of one of his genial and delightful articles for the *Daily News*.

During the whole of my parliamentary experience I had the good fortune to dine at the same time and at the same table with Justin McCarthy. It was in a quiet little corner of the big dining-room. The fine literary flavour of his comment and outlook on men and things made, indeed, a rare intellectual treat. The dinner-hour was for me a delightful oasis in the dreary desert of the parliamentary day.

Though Justin McCarthy usually delegated the work of leadership to Mr. Sexton, he spoke occasionally with a power

that one would hardly expect from a man of his gentle and genial nature. I remember few things more effective than his reply to the present Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, who, as Home Secretary, in a hard and unsympathetic speech, refused to consider the release of certain political prisoners.

"The right honourable gentleman," said the gentle Justin, "has not merely closed the prison gates on these unhappy men, he has closed them with a clang."

Later on I shall have a word to say about the visit I paid the dear old veteran in his retirement at Westgate-on-Sea.

While a Member in the House of Commons I also took an actual part in the National organization in Ireland, as the following letter may testify :—

"My dear Bodkin,

"I congratulate you on the grand work you have done. You have certainly been largely instrumental in saving the situation in Dublin from a diabolical tangle. It is terrible to allow affairs to drift into such a position when all danger and trouble could be avoided by a decision taken in time. . . .

"You have done splendidly for the parliamentary fund. Before you went over it was under an extinguisher.

"Yours sincerely,

"John Dillon."

It is now no secret that when the House of Lords rejected Home Rule Mr. Gladstone was in favour of appealing to the country. He was overruled and retired, and Lord Rosebery slipped into his place. In his first speech as Prime Minister Lord Rosebery declared that there was "no change of policy, only a disastrous change of leaders." The last part of the sentence, at least, proved pitifully true. From the date of Mr. Gladstone's retirement the session was an anti-climax. We plodded through routine work, the Irish party loyally backing up their Liberal allies who had passed Home Rule. Often when I hear afterwards of Ireland's ingratitude to the Liberal party I remember that dreary period when the Irish party loyally helped the Liberals to

hold their places and pass their Bills with the assurance of a reciprocal loyalty to Home Rule.

The end came suddenly at last.

There was a snap division in a thin House, and the Liberals were put to their choice—either rescind the vote, which they could easily have done, if so disposed, or go to the country. The issue at the General Election was raised in Mr. Morley's famous phrase "to mend or end the House of Lords." But the Liberals were hampered with the leadership of a lord, whose shuffling and faltering at every step led them to ruin.

For myself, I dropped out of Parliament quietly, though, let me confess, reluctantly as well.

I look back over my time there with a curious fascination. I do not regret the experience so dearly bought. It is something, it is much, to have recorded a vote in that momentous division on Home Rule; it is much to have mingled as an actor, however humble, in those momentous happenings.

Would I like to be back again? Let me be quite frank and confess I would. The House of Commons grips a man even while he grumbles.

For years after I had committed parliamentary suicide I could not bear to revisit the House. I had a curious objection to being stopped at this door or that as a mere member of the public, and, above all, at the door of the Legislative Chamber itself, through which as a Member of the House I passed freely. When at last I conquered my repugnance, I was surprised to find myself recognized and accosted by the officials. But my feelings, as I chatted with my friends and former colleagues who came and went through the swinging doors of the House (with a big "H"), were a very fair imitation of those of Tom Moore's famous Peri, who

> At the open gate
> Of Eden stood disconsolate.

I had many flattering requests to return, the most flattering from my native place, the Tuam Division of County Galway, endorsed by Mr. Justin McCarthy, who enclosed to me the letter addressed to him on the subject by an

influential priest of the district, and backed up the request by an earnest appeal of his own. "I have no doubt," he wrote, "that you would be the best candidate for North Galway. Is your resolution not to contest any constituency irrevocable?"

Again my poverty, and not my will, refused. My practice at the Bar had necessarily been much impaired by my absence in Parliament, and to supplement my income I settled down to a new phase of Press life as chief leader writer to the *Freeman's Journal*, a position which I could not afford to abandon.

CHAPTER XXV

THE EDITORIAL "WE"

Tricks of the trade—Searching for subjects—"God save the King!"—Campbell-Bannerman and Lord Rosebery—Raising the flag of Home Rule—The editor's sanctum—Miscellaneous visitors—A Christian Science miracle.

I HAVE already commented on the ignorance of the man in the street regarding the life-work of the purveyor of news, his ignorance of the purveyor of opinions is even more remarkable. The newspaper reader is on intimate terms with the newspaper writer. He chats with him at breakfast, gossips at lunch and settles down for a serious talk after dinner, yet he knows absolutely nothing of his guide, philosopher and friend. The leading articles in the favourite journal are read and quoted without a thought of how they came to be written. The mysterious editorial "we" is vaguely suggestive of an oracle kept tame on the newspaper premises and ready to deliver impromptu and infallible pronouncements on every subject under heaven, for the leader writer must know something of everything, or at least successfully assume a knowledge if he have it not.

During the years I was chief editorial writer of the *Freeman* I went down to the office every night at about ten and returned at two or three in the morning. Some nights my themes were provided by the editor, others I had to find them for myself. In dull times this hunting up of subjects was the hardest part of the night's work. The choice was wide, ranging, as our editor, W. F. Brayden, used to remark, from "cholera to cooling drinks," and it was hard to know whether to treat the public to a column of grave instruction or a column of lively chaff. The trouble was to make a trite

subject interesting or a complex subject clear within the inexorable limits. Very often the writer's chief care was to conceal his own ignorance, to avoid palpable blunders. But there are few subjects on which a reasonably competent leader writer does not know a column's worth, and it is his function to put into his leader everything he knows and nothing that he doesn't.

A harder ordeal still in times of stress was to keep pace with sudden emergencies. Very often the editor would place in my hands in the small hours of the morning the first " flimsies " announcing some striking event, the delivery of an eloquent speech, the passing of an important Act of Parliament, and my comment would have to keep pace with the " flimsies " as they came from the telegraph *en route* for the printing office, so that the last page of news and the last page of the article should go out together to the compositors. Next morning such hastily concocted comment is accepted by the readers as the gravely considered judgment of the editorial " we."

Hasty writing is saved by hasty reading. Few people think of criticizing a newspaper. Now and again it has happened that a series of leading articles that have attracted attention at the time of their publication, have been subsequently compiled into a book, but it has almost invariably been observed that the " thoughtful " article becomes prosy and the " vigorous " article becomes " bunkum " when subjected to such treatment.

The leader writer is occasionally betrayed into amusing absurdities. We all know the celebrated instance of the writer in the *Skibbereen Eagle*, who gravely commenced an article with the solemn announcement : " We have our eye on the Emperor of Russia." Dickens, it is said, could never afterwards hear the word Skibbereen mentioned without a convulsion of irrepressible laughter.

A blunder at least as ludicrous occurred within my own personal knowledge. A leader writer in the Conservative organ *The Down Recorder* was discussing the propriety of arresting Mr. Parnell, a course which he admitted might be followed by some local disturbance. " But the Government,"

he continued, "in this matter may learn a useful lesson from the pages of history. About fifty years ago, the historian tells us, an *émeute* occurred in a remote town in Cornwall. The Government promptly arrested a man named Trelawny, who was the ringleader of the disturbance, and conveyed him in custody to London. Now this Trelawny was a person of considerable local influence, and the miners manifested their indignation by parading the streets of the town singing a seditious chorus :—

> And shall Trelawny die ?
> And shall Trelawny die ?
> Here's twenty thousand Cornishmen
> To know the reason why.

But the Government, undeterred by these threats, inflicted on Mr. Trelawny the punishment his offences deserved, and this vigour had a most salutary effect on quelling the disturbances."

For myself I am glad to believe that my many thousand leading articles are buried in unfathomable oblivion. Yet it is pleasant also to think that once in a way an article written on the spur of the moment may have done some service in its time, helped a good cause forward or hindered a bad one. This much, at least, I may claim, I never wrote a line that did not express my honest conviction.

One night when I was at a loss for a subject, the news was wired to the *Freeman's Journal* Office that the King's coronation had to be postponed, and that his Majesty himself had just submitted to a painful and dangerous operation for appendicitis, of which the issue was still doubtful. My subject was found for me.

"Controversy is hushed," I wrote, "in the face of this pitiful human tragedy. For the moment men of all opinions in Ireland regard the King not as the monarch, but as the man. We see him, not resplendent on a throne with crowds assembled from the four corners of the earth to do him homage, but helpless on a bed of pain, dubiously hovering between life and death. Amid the impending pomp and ceremony of the coronation, poor frail humanity has claimed the King as her own, an urgent claim and not to be denied.

In the very hour of his supremest triumph he has been constrained to drain to the dregs the bitter cup of suffering from which no son of Adam is exempt. The royal body has felt not the touch of the consecrating chrism, but the keen edge of the surgeon's knife. Surely never was a more vivid example of the vanity of human wishes, the littleness of human greatness. The news of his sickness, flashed over the land and through the sea, has sent a thrill through the world of pity and dismay. In every country, from the Court to the cottage, there is thought and talk to-day of the King of England, Emperor of India and Lord of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, sick, even to death, on the eve of his coronation. But how poor a thing, and of how small moment, is the world's anxiety to the mere suffering man! How little avails him now the flattery and homage of the world!

> O, be sick, great greatess,
> And bid thy ceremony give thee cure;
> Thinkst thou the fiery fever will go out
> With titles blown from adulation?
> Will it give place to flexture and low bending?
> Canst thou, when thou commandst the beggar's knee,
> Command the health of it?

"Never had moralist a more convincing theme to rail against the servile worship or the sordid envy of wealth or pomp or power that avail so little against pain, disease and death.

"Joined with the feeling of human sympathy with the prostrate monarch, there is a touch of inevitable admiration for the Spartan heroism with which he has borne up so long against the disease that was gnawing at his vitals.

"The Irish party had refused to take part in the ceremonial of the Coronation, but in the Irish isolation and protest there was mingled no feeling of personal animosity to the King. The belief is current in Ireland, and not without reason, that the King was friendly to a treaty of peace between the two nations, conceived and almost accomplished by the great British statesman for whom he always manifested a profound respect and admiration, never more plainly manifested than when Gladstone was engaged in his

heroic struggle for Home Rule. Still, Ireland alone out of the whole British Empire stood aloof from all participation in the coronation. Ireland denied homage to the mighty King in the hour of his glory. She will not deny her sympathy to the suffering man in the hour of his helplessness and danger. Perhaps for the first time in her history, and not in the blatant and insulting spirit in which the words are so often spoken in this island, she breathes the prayer to-day, 'God save the King!'"

I have selected this article from the many thousand I have written, because of the sensation it created, not on its own account, but by reason of its appearance in a Nationalist newspaper. It was copied verbatim into the London dailies, and was fortunate enough to attract the attention of his Majesty the King.

I was told on good authority, and repeat the story for what it may be worth, that his late Majesty questioned Sir Thomas Lipton, as one likely to know, concerning the name of the writer. Sir Thomas Lipton could only tell him that Mr. Thomas Sexton was the chairman of the *Freeman's Journal* Company. With this his Majesty was satisfied. He naturally assumed that the best intellect at the company's disposal would be devoted to a subject so important. He had always, he was pleased to say, greatly admired the speeches of Mr. Sexton. "*Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves.*"

One other article I may mention which was not without its influence on men and affairs. On the eve of the General Election that dismissed the Unionists there was a great deal of quibbling among the Liberal leaders, under the influence of Lord Rosebery, on the question of Home Rule. It was for the most part accepted by the Liberals as a pious opinion, but it was tabooed as an issue in the election, and a pledge was volunteered to the electors that no Home Rule Bill would be introduced during the ensuing session.

Just at this time Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman made a stirring speech at Stirling, in which he freely recognized the justice of the Irish claim and pledged himself to active support.

Thereupon I wrote an article in the *Freeman's Journal* in

thorough approval of the speech, concluding with the words : " Every vote given for Campbell-Bannerman is a vote given for Home Rule."

Next day the article was quoted by Lord Rosebery as proof that there was a full understanding between Campbell-Bannerman and the Irish Home Rulers. " He has raised," said Lord Rosebery, " the banner of Home Rule in its most undisguised form, and under that banner I, for one, refuse to serve."

To his Lordship's desertion the Liberals were largely indebted for their overwhelming victory at the polls. From that time until the election was over the *Freeman's Journal* article was freely quoted on the Unionist platform and in the Unionist Press as a proof that Home Rule was the real issue before the electors, with a result exceedingly satisfactory for Home Rulers.

The editor's sanctum of a daily paper has a strange attraction for all classes and conditions of people. As acting-editor of the *Freeman* during the vacations and other necessary absences of the editor, Mr. Brayden, I had some curious experiences. Certainly I had no reason to complain of lack of variety or humour in my correspondence and visitors.

The letters that appear in a newspaper are not by any means as interesting as letters that are, for one reason or another, suppressed as unfit for publication. The editor's visiting list is most miscellaneous. On the same night I have interviewed a pugilist (Jem Corbett), a bishop, an actor, an author and a publican.

A charming old lady came to me on one occasion to complain to me of a severe article which I had written ridiculing the pretensions of Christian Scientists.

I explained that these were my honest views and that I felt bound to express them, but I readily consented to publish a letter from her in reply, which I regarded as excellent " copy."

Thereupon she essayed to convert me, instancing many remarkable cures within her own experiences.

I stated my position. All these cures seemed to me, I said,

allowing for natural exaggeration in the telling of them, to be quite possible by natural means. But if a man's leg was cut off at the thigh and the Christian Scientists by their prayers grew another leg on to the stump, I would be convinced. If their doctrine were sound, I added, such a feat would be as easy as to cure a cold in the head, and a good deal more convincing.

The dear old lady gravely considered my suggestion.

"Well," she said, after a pause, "I must confess, I never came across exactly such an instance as you mention. But I knew a case of a bad sprained ankle that was cured in less than a fortnight."

CHAPTER XXVI

TWO MEN WORTH KNOWING

Sir Hugh Lane, an authority on Art—A touch of his quality—Captain Shaw Taylor, social reformer—"The man for Galway"—Author of the Land Conference—A questionable Corot—A curious incident—The Captain and the screwdriver.

WITH two very interesting men, less known than they deserve to be by the outside public, my editorial duties made me acquainted—Sir Hugh Lane, the great picture connoisseur, and Captain Shaw Taylor, the social reformer.

When Sir Hugh gave his first great exhibition in Dublin, though I yield to no man in my ignorance of painting, I agreed to write the notice for the *Freeman's Journal*, and by the assimilation of hints and suggestions, a very necessary faculty of the journalist, and by writing all the little I knew and carefully evading the great deal I didn't know, I contrived a three-column article that pleased and helped him. His gratitude was the beginning of our friendship.

It is no place here to speak of the incomparable service Sir Hugh rendered to Dublin by the formation of the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, and his princely benefactions to the collection; but I must say a word or two of his strange gift, instinct, genius, call it what you will, for discerning and identifying pictures however disguised by age or grime.

He lives for pictures and by pictures. His eyes are more discriminating of artistic excellence than the sensitive palate of the taster in determining the quality of a tea or the vintage of a wine. The thickest coating of dirt, even another picture superimposed, cannot hide a masterpiece from those bright eyes of his. Nor can he explain quite satisfactorily how he arrives at his conclusions. It is a purely natural

gift that was his from a boy. To my thinking he is like the man in the fairy-tale on whose eyes the magic ointment was rubbed, which enabled him to detect treasures hidden in the bowels of the earth.

I have heard many startling stories of this strange gift of Sir Hugh Lane's. Let me instance a couple that came under my own personal notice.

One day, as I was looking through the window of an old curiosity shop in Dublin, Sir Hugh came behind me and touched me on the shoulder.

"Let us go in," he said, "and see if he has any pictures."

We climbed to a wide empty attic hung round with paintings of all sorts, mostly daubs.

"That," said Sir Hugh, pointing to a small dirty panel that hung high up on the wall, "is a Van Goyen. No, let me see, it is by a pupil of his, Pieter Moylyn."

We fetched up the proprietor. He named a different painter. But when the picture was taken down and closely examined, there was found in the corner the signature that justified Sir Hugh. Through the mask of dirt he had identified this second-class Dutch painter as quickly and as confidently as a man identifies the familiar hand-writing of a friend. The charming little landscape hangs in my parlour as a memento of the incident.

Another illustration I may offer as striking and more amusing.

"I have found a very dirty Salvator Rosa," said Sir Hugh one morning to my son, who had won his favour by a discriminating taste for pictures. "It is hidden away in an old curiosity shop, and I am going to buy it for you and show you how to clean it." Then, having arranged their plan of campaign, they proceeded together to the shop.

Sir Hugh spoke to the proprietor, who knew them both.

"I want to teach young Mr. Bodkin," he said, "how to clean a picture, and I want the dirtiest you have. I think that" (pointing to a manifest daub that hung in the full light) "about fills the bill; what is the price of that?"

Before the other could reply, my son, by prearrangement, chimed in.

" I think that is even dirtier," he said, and indicated the Salvator Rosa.

" All right," Lane answered carelessly, " have it your own way. What is the price of either of these two ? "

" You can have your choice for fifteen shillings," said the dealer, and they chose the Salvator Rosa.

When I saw the picture after the purchase, it was a broad square of canvas caked all over with dirt. Under Sir Hugh's careful cleaning, it resolved itself into a bearded old man with a basket on his back. Both Sir Hugh and my son were in artistic ecstasies over the wonderful red of his tattered old coat.

Captain Shaw Taylor never achieved with the public the reputation to which his ability and services entitled him. To him, more than to any other man, was due the final settlement of the Irish Land Question. For he originated the startling idea of a friendly Land Conference between the representatives of landlords and tenants, and in the face of difficulties that, to any other man, would have been irresistible, he carried his audacious project to a successful issue. He had boundless energy and a captivating manner ; no rebuff discouraged, no difficulty damped him, and when he took you into his confidence with his friendly formula, " between you and me and the bedpost," he was impossible to resist.

In one of his random sketches Judge Adams gives us some interesting sidelights on the character of the Captain.

It seemed that a process-server had served a writ on Captain Shaw Taylor that was meant for another officer, and by way of punishment the Captain had him locked up for half an hour in the guard-room. The case came before Judge Adams on a process for false imprisonment. In delivering judgment Adams quoted for the Captain (himself a Galway man) Lever's rollicking lines :—

To drink a toast,
A proctor roast,
  Or bailiff, as the case is ;
To kiss your wife,
To take a life
  At ten or fifteen paces ;

To keep game cocks,
To hunt the fox,
To drink in punch the Solway ;
With debts galore,
With fun far more,
Oh, that's the man for Galway !

This high ideal of a Galway man's duties, the judge explained, was no longer recognized by the law, and he awarded the bailiff the liberal damages of a pound.

" But," Adams continued, " the Captain bore no malice, for a very little time afterwards he asked me to dine at the mess. He was a charming and most hospitable host. But I noticed after a time that, while he plied his guests with the foaming grape of Eastern France he himself washed down his viands with that unexciting tipple, Limerick pipe-water. I said, ' You don't take wine ? ' ' Ah, no,' he said, ' you see, I'm always at the poor Tommies about drinking, and how could I have any weight with them if I took wine myself ? '

" After dinner cigarettes were handed round in due course, and again I observed that my Captain did not smoke. It was the same reason. ' The poor Tommies,' he said, ' spend all their money in buying cigarettes and ruin their health inhaling, so as an example I have given up smoking myself.'

" This, I thought, is quite a new kind of Captain to meet at a regimental mess, and as the night wore on this impression was every moment deepened.

" The Captain talked of matters seldom heard of in such a place. The condition, the sufferings, the hopes of his country. ' Across the Irish path,' he said, ' there were three great giants, three Goliaths of Gath. The licensing question, which in its present state is poisoning rural Ireland by the wholesale multiplication of public-houses ; the land question, which has filled Ireland with tears of blood ; the condition of University education, a last relic of the bad old times of religious feud and intolerance.'

" ' Yes,' I said, ' they are three Goliaths, but where is David the son of Jesse ? '

" ' Upon my word,' he said, ' I sometimes think I will have a try at them myself.'

" My eye caught that of an officer at the other side of the table who had heard some of the conversation. Our mutual glance had a plain meaning. Turned into plain English it was ' amiable dreamer.'

" In due course the regiment left Limerick, and was sent to the war, where my host was stricken with a deadly illness. I heard that he had come home and recovered his health, and then when he was slipping from my memory I began to see his name in the papers.

" After a little time I made a strange discovery. That night I had met unawares the true Jack the Giant Killer. This young soldier was no amiable dreamer, but a man at the sound of whose trumpet ancient wrongs fell down. This young man was, indeed, a new David, the son of Jesse. At the first pebble from his scrip—the summons to the Licensing Conference in Dublin—the licensing scandal fell to earth. At the second—the summons to the Land Conference—the land question was settled. A third pebble has been hurled from the sling, and, behold, that venerable Goliath, the intolerance which refuses justice to Ireland in the matter of Catholic education, reels ominously, and may at any moment sink to the earth and die among its worshippers."

Yet Judge Adams was not so wrong after all, in his first impression of the Captain, embodied in that quotation from Lever. The old Adam was not quite dead in him, the Galway devil-may-care recklessness broke out occasionally in the social reformer. The following incident might have found an appropriate place in the adventures of Charles O'Malley :—

Captain Shaw Taylor had an intense admiration for his cousin Sir Hugh Lane. Now it chanced that while Sir Hugh, with tireless energy, was getting together the collection for his gallery, he induced the then Prince of Wales, now King George V, to purchase a picture which was reputed to be an early example of the great French painter Corot. Sir Hugh has rivals who would be glad to catch him tripping, and the rumour was industriously circulated that the picture in question was not a Corot at all, but a copy of a painting in the Budapest Gallery. Nay, more, when Sir

Hugh's collection found a temporary shelter in one of the rooms of the Dublin Museum there was screwed up on the outside wall, just at the door of the gallery, a huge photo of the Budapest picture for the purpose of discrediting the Corot and disabling the artistic reputation of Sir Hugh.

About this time Captain Shaw Taylor got married. I don't say he married for the express purpose, but he certainly made his honeymoon an excuse for a visit to Budapest. There he carefully scrutinized the picture which had been the origin of the controversy. As an art critic he was probably as incompetent as myself, but he had no difficulty in convincing himself that the picture bore no resemblance to the Corot approved of by his cousin.

Returning to Dublin, he drove at once to the Museum with his bride and a screwdriver. Having installed his bride in a comfortable seat he proceeded to unscrew the objectionable photo. To the inquiring policeman in charge of the place he explained the situation with an engaging frankness that quite won his heart. The Corot, he assured him, was absolutely genuine, it bore no resemblance to the picture which he had just examined in Budapest. The photograph was intended as an insult to his cousin Hugh Lane, and he had therefore come to remove it. The policeman sympathized with his view of the situation, and presently the Captain drove off in his cab with his bride, his screwdriver and the objectionable photograph, which he doubtless preserved as a trophy, even as the wrenched knocker is preserved by the young man about town.

CHAPTER XXVII

DUNLOP OF THE PNEUMATIC TYRE

The boom of the century—A financial misfortune—How I met J. B. Dunlop —Our friendship—Full, true and particular account of the Dunlop tyre —Its trials and triumphs—Dunlop and Thompson—Invented and re-invented—Troublesome visitors—A lunatic and a heroine.

A CURIOUS chance brought me into relations of close intimacy with the famous J. B. Dunlop, the inventor, or perhaps I should rather say the rediscoverer, of the pneumatic tyre.

I may say, in passing, that the Dunlop tyre is a rather sore subject with me. I believed in the tyre from the first, and when the company was started to exploit it with a capital of £20,000 in pound shares I applied for a hundred. But a stockbroker assured me it was a wild-cat company, and a champion cyclist assured me that the invention was worthless. The company obligingly allowed me to cancel my application, and I lost, I am afraid to think how many tens of thousands of pounds by the process. The company paid a hundred per cent dividends for many years, and was eventually sold for three millions.

My first interview with Mr. Dunlop was connected with a little bicycle invention of my own, a combined lamp bracket and carrier, of which I subsequently sold the patent to Messrs. Brown and Son, London manufacturers. At that time Mr. Dunlop was chairman of the great Dublin drapery concern, Todd, Burns and Co., of which I happened to be a preference shareholder.

Some months later I chanced to hear that the company was not doing as well as heretofore. But as it had paid eight per cent on the ordinary shares for the previous half-year, I was not seriously perturbed about my preference shares. Close to the date of the annual meeting I received a number

of circulars attacking the directors and management, and finally was startled by the report and statement of accounts, which showed a heavy deficit and no interest on ordinary or preference shares. Then I had another interview with Mr. Dunlop, and he convinced me that though there had been mismanagement the company was capable of financial recovery, and that a systematic attempt was on foot to wreck it. At his suggestion I resolved to attend the meeting of shareholders.

It was the first meeting of the kind I had ever attended, it was the first time I had ever put a foot on the company's premises. The shareholders were naturally furious, and at the outset of the proceedings a motion was proposed to put the company into liquidation. Then I made the speech of my life. I took for my text the proverb that it is folly to cry over spilt milk, and I argued that it would be still greater folly to kill the cow in revenge. I explained the financial condition of the company, and so completely carried the meeting with me that the liquidation motion had only the proposer and seconder to support it, and a vote of thanks to the chairman and directors was carried unanimously.

A few days later I had a very courteous and pressing invitation to join the board. After considerable hesitation I accepted, and remained a director of Todd, Burns and Co. until I was appointed a judge. Never was there a more amicable board of directors. During the whole time I was a member we never put a single question to a division. I do not suggest *post hoc propter hoc*, but it is allowable to mention that when I joined the board the ordinary pound shares of the company were selling at a few shillings, and the five pound preference at two pounds ten. When I left the ordinary and preference were both at par.

I mention this incident mainly to explain the intimacy that grew up between myself and Mr. Dunlop, with whom I had many chats about the great invention by which bicycles were made serviceable and motors possible. Later still the pneumatic tyre was commandeered by the aeroplane. There is certainly no man now living who has

contributed more to the convenience, comfort and innocent enjoyment of the world at large than J. B. Dunlop.

It is not necessary to describe Mr. Dunlop's appearance. That broad, low, knobby forehead and flowing beard are familiar to the world. There are more portraits of him abroad than any man, reigning kings alone excepted. Kings have their portraits on coins and postage stamps; Mr. Dunlop's face is stamped, and a good likeness too, on every Dunlop tyre that is sold the wide world over.

Very slow of speech is Mr. Dunlop, with a genius for natural science which almost seems instinctive, for he reads few books. In the course of many conversations he told me the full, true and particular account of the invention of the pneumatic tyre.

At the time of the invention he was practising as a veterinary surgeon in Belfast, and a little while before he had stamped out pleuro-pneumonia in his district, an achievement of which he is as proud as he is of his tyre.

Mr. Dunlop has often described himself to me as a man with a microscope mind and eye whom no trifle could escape. He noticed that the solid rubber tyres of an old side-steering tricycle ridden by his little son Johnny cut deeply into the soft ground. "What is hard on the ground," he said to himself, "must be hard on the rider," and he set to work to find something that would be easier for both.

He resents the common rumour that the pneumatic tyre was invented solely for the comfort of a delicate boy. His son, he declares, was never delicate, and he emphatically denies the imputation that, intending only to diminish vibration, he discovered speed by accident. From the first, he declares, he knew that the two things must go together.

What he wanted was a broader, lighter and more elastic tyre than rubber, a tyre that would glide with less friction over the ground and involve less effort for the rider. After careful thought he came to the conclusion that compressed air was the only material that would answer the desired conditions.

All the same, his son was the direct cause of the invention.

He chanced to say to his boy, " Some day, when I have time, I will make you wheels that will go faster than any bicycle in town."

That settled it. In season and out of season the boy insisted on the promise, and Mr. Dunlop, though a very busy man, had to make or find time to redeem it.

" It was a very primitive beginning," he told me. " I cut a square piece from a broad plank, knocked off the corners and rounded it to a wheel. I was, fortunately, accustomed before this to work in rubber. I always made my own rubber gloves and any other little instrument required in my profession. In constructing the first pneumatic tyre I had to make everything I needed. There was no tube to be bought of the kind I wanted, so I made one for myself with a thin sheet of rubber and an adhesive solution. This I wound round my wooden wheel, sticking on a bit of the tubing of a baby's feeding-bottle for a valve. But if I had tried to inflate this unprotected tube it would have swelled like a bladder until it burst. I needed an outer covering. My wife provided me with a strip of an old grey linen dress, which was exactly what I wanted. This I passed over the rubber air tube and tacked it neatly and lightly to the sides of the wheel. Then I blew it hard with an air-pump and tied up the valve. So the very first Dunlop pneumatic tyre was complete.

" The test was as primitive as the wheel. I arranged a trial gallop in my own back yard, with only stablemen for spectators. Taking off the front wheel of my boy's tricycle, I rolled it with all my force down the yard. It ran about three-quarters of the distance before it tottered and fell. At the first trial the pneumatic bolted off the course and dashed with great force into a wall. But at the second trial it ran straight and fast the whole length of the yard, struck the wall at the other end and came back nearly half-way to the starting-point. The stablemen declared that it went of its own accord, and that the further it went the faster it ran.

" It is easy to understand," said Mr. Dunlop, " that there was much to be done before the pneumatic tyre could be made serviceable. My son Johnny had the first pneumatic-

tyred tricycle ever made, a model which we still preserve. The ease and speed with which he rode naturally attracted attention, and by degrees I contrived to fit the wheels to a bicycle. Everything I needed was still to be made with my own hands, and I had to invent all the accessories as I went along, including a valve, which in principle is the same as that in use to the present day on bicycle and motor.

"But if it was a hard thing to invent and construct the pneumatic tyre, it was a harder thing still to get people to ride it, and hardest of all to get them to buy it."

At last, by dint of untiring patience, Mr. Dunlop secured a public trial for his great invention. The Belfast College sports in 1889 was the turning-point in the career of the pneumatic tyre. The chief event of the day was a mile bicycle race, for which the prize was a superb gold watch presented by Sir William Wallace.

The event brought cycling champions together from all parts of the three kingdoms. It is interesting to note that amongst the competitors in this contest were young Arthur Du Cros, then Irish champion, and his brothers Alfred and Harvey, junior, and amongst the spectators was Harvey Du Cros, the chief promoter and present chairman of the Dunlop Company.

A young Belfast cyclist, Bill Hume, had also entered for the contest, and had agreed for a consideration to ride a bicycle fitted with pneumatic tyres. He was regarded as an absolute outsider for the race.

Mr. Dunlop has frequently, in his own deliberate fashion, described to me that memorable event.

No man is a prophet in his own country, still less in his own city, and poor Bill Hume was greeted with a storm of good-humoured chaff when he appeared on his ungainly machine with the "rag and rubber tyres," as they were contemptuously nicknamed. "I was a bit ashamed of them myself," Mr. Dunlop confessed, "they looked so clumsy beside the neat rubber, and I hid myself away with Johnny at the back of the crowd."

The race was four laps, and for the first lap Bill Hume kept discreetly in the rear. The laughter followed him all

round the course. " Go it, old mud cart ! " echoed from the crowd as he went by. " No wonder he's slow," shouted a voice, " sure, his mare is in foal."

But when Bill Hume in the second round began to creep up through the competitors, ridicule gradually gave place to amazement. When the third round was reached only the two Du Cros were in front of him. The bell rang for the last lap, and he closed up on the leaders. Then surprise gave place to excitement and excitement to enthusiasm. Two hundred yards from home, with a wonderful spurt, Hume reached and passed the leaders one after another as if they were standing still, and won by sixty yards, amid such thunders of applause as were never heard on the college grounds before or since.

" He has a devil bottled up in those tyres," was the comment of a bookmaker who lost heavily on the event. There were four other bicycle contests that day, and Bill Hume on his " rag and rubber " tyres won them all.

It is not necessary to trace the further history and triumphs of the pneumatic tyre as narrated to me in detail by Mr. Dunlop ; but it is interesting to note that not until long afterwards, when his tyre had become world-famous, that either bicycle or tricycle was ridden by the inventor.

Long after the Dunlop Company was floated came the startling discovery of a previous invention of a pneumatic tyre. In point of fact, there never was a valid patent for the Dunlop pneumatic tyre: anyone that chose could make and sell it, asking no leave, paying no royalty.

Here surely is the most astounding part of this astounding story. It was strange enough that any one man should have thought of running vehicles on wheels of compressed air, it is almost incredible that two men should independently hit on the same idea.

Thompson was the name of the unappreciated genius who lived thirty years before his time, and who, like the second inventor of the pneumatic tyre, was a Scotchman. Mr. Dunlop might well have exclaimed : " Cursed be they who think our thoughts before us ! " for Thompson's invention spoiled the Dunlop patent.

If he had been more detailed in his specifications, Mr. Dunlop believes that he would have secured a valid patent. But how was he to guess that another man had been there before? Huge as was the financial success of the Dunlop tyre, it would have been multiplied a hundredfold if the monopoly for a pneumatic tyre could have been secured. "If my patent was valid," said Mr. Dunlop, "we would have earned money enough to pay the National Debt."

More than once Mr. Dunlop has expressed to me his bitter disappointment that Ireland has profited so little by the invention. The intention of the company was to keep the manufacture of its tyres in Dublin, but their good intention was defeated by the Dublin Corporation.

A disagreeable, though not unwholesome, smell was created by the necessary smearing of the tubing with a solution of rubber dissolved in naphtha. The Dublin Corporation prosecuted the company for creating a nuisance. The company won, but the Corporation threatened an appeal. As a result the manufactory was shifted to Coventry, and the gigantic industry was lost for ever to the Irish metropolis.

It was the inevitable penalty of Mr. Dunlop's success and reputation that he should be plagued for advice and assistance by a myriad of inventors in varying stages of insanity. One instance perhaps deserves mention in the briefest possible outline.

Some time ago he got a letter with a Rotterdam postmark on the envelope, in which the writer claimed to be the joint inventor of the pneumatic tyre. As he had never been to Rotterdam in his life and had never seen or heard of the claimant, Mr. Dunlop paid no heed to the letter. It was followed by a personal visit, in which the claim was eloquently albeit incoherently urged. Both he and his son came to the conclusion that the visitor whom they bowed politely to the door was mad. They were right in that; they were wrong in thinking that they would see or hear no more of him.

Some days later, as Mr. Dunlop returned from Dublin, heated by a bicycle ride in the hot sunshine, he was met on

his way to the bathroom by his wife with the news that the mad claimant was waiting for him in the dining-room. The man looked excited, she noticed, and both his pockets were dragged down as by some heavy weight.

Mrs. Dunlop has long been in very fragile health, but, as the event shows, she has the courage of a lioness, or to put it more strongly still, of a true woman when those she loves are in danger.

" I will keep the man engaged," she said to her husband, " while you go for the police."

" First," Mr. Dunlop urged, " get him to put his claim in writing." He hoped by the device to engage the madman's time and attention until he should have completed the arrangements for his entertainment.

But the lunatic was equal to the occasion. He promptly handed over to Mrs. Dunlop an elaborate document ready written.

The husband and wife read it together outside the door, and quickly lit on the threat that he would " enforce his claim at the point of the pistol."

Thereupon, without more ado, Mrs. Dunlop dispatched her husband on his bicycle for the police, while she went back to entertain the armed lunatic in the dining-room.

" Mr. Dunlop would be in presently," she explained. She was sorry to keep him waiting. Would he not take a chair ? She offered him the deepest, softest, most luxurious arm-chair in the room, and he sank down among the cushions.

The lunatic grew restless, and she soothed him with plausible apologies for her husband's absence. Once, while she stood by the window that looked out on the road, she saw a policeman go slowly by. The temptation was strong to beckon him to her aid. But measuring the policeman with her eye, she found him shorter, smaller and slighter than the gaunt madman that sat watchful in the arm-chair. Moreover, caution whispered that even the beckoning motion of her hand might wake the quick suspicion and the deadly fury of insanity.

So she let the long moments of agonized expectancy go by until after hours, as it seemed to her, minutes as the clock

counts time, her husband returned with four stalwart policemen. It was Mrs. Dunlop that ushered them into the dining-room, covering their advance.

"Here are some gentlemen to see you, sir," she said. "No, not Mr. Dunlop," she explained, with a touch of grim humour, as moving aside she revealed the uniformed visitors.

He would have leaped upon them instantly, but he had sunk low in the cushions and could not readily find his feet, and in a moment the compelling hand of the sergeant was on his shoulder.

"You have some claim on Mr. Dunlop?" the sergeant inquired blandly.

"Claim?" he puzzled out the word in a pocket dictionary he carried with him to assist conversation. "Yes, claim," he assented.

"And you mean to enforce it at the pistol point?"

At this the madman's right hand dived into the bulging pocket, perhaps to give practical illustration. But the sergeant's grip went down like a flash from his shoulder to his wrist and held it tight.

Then from his right-hand pocket the police drew forth two huge six-chambered revolvers, fully loaded, and from his left a hundred rounds of ammunition. In a belt under his coat was stuck a dagger with a keen-edged blade eleven inches long.

When these pretty instruments were piled together on the dining-room table and the handcuffs clicked on the wrist of the owner, Mr. Dunlop could appreciate from what peril he had been rescued by the heroism of his wife.

The rest of the story is comparatively commonplace. It tells of a trial, a conviction and a lunatic asylum. The moral of the tale suggests that kings and presidents are not the only folk on whom greatness brings trouble. The man that is lifted above his fellows by birth or brains is always in danger of being made a cockshot for malice or madness. But I think I am safe in saying that the only man that ever wanted to do J. B. Dunlop an ill turn is at present in a lunatic asylum.

Some months later he received the following strange

epistle; but he has not yet made his importunate visitor free to resume business relations.

"THE CENTRAL ASYLUM,
"DUNDRUM, CO. DUBLIN,
"*Day of* 1 *February*, 1901.

"Letter from patient: Th. Prost.
"To: Mr. John Boyd Dunlop.
"Address: Aylesbury Road, Donnybrook, Dublin.

"Villa Thareldaene.

"Gentleman!

"With this I would ask you most kindly if you can not make me free from prison, while I would have my liberty again, under those circumstances you may not refuse it me. As I have heard here, I am now several months in prison and which the question has not been so great that I shall must stay here whole my life, so I hope. While you have promised me much money in being free, I hope you will think once good over both things on me. As you have acknowledged me a great part of the invention has belonged to me we can be than both content and would go directly at home by possibility, while it can become here too faticant for me in having broken ribs and having been heavy sick. You shall well excuse my last visit content over it. I had spoke off with your son that we should go together to the police and therefore I was surprised, but I hope to be quite better when I can go at home. By possibility I shall make you then no visit more, and hope in following times the business shall go as desired and no quarrelling shall have more place. With that I hope to receive soon some response and have the pleasure to call me

"Respectfully,
"TH. PROST."

CHAPTER XXVIII

JUSTIN McCARTHY

Pleasant recollections—A visit to a veteran—Justin McCarthy in exile—It is an ill wind that blows nobody good—With our toes on the fender—A good talk—The man with many friends—Glimpses of the past—A picture gallery of celebrities—All the great men of his generation—A delightful literary commission—An amusing incident—Justin's candour—An ardent Home Ruler.

AS I have elsewhere written, there were none of my parliamentary colleagues with whom I was more intimate than Justin McCarthy. He lingered on in the House for some time after I left it. In March, 1896, I wrote to him with regard to some literary project we had on foot in connection with the *Freeman's Journal*, and received the following reply :—

"73, EATON TERRACE, S.W.,
"*March 17th*, 1896.

"MY DEAR MATT,

"Thank you very much for the information you give me concerning the literary project of the *Freeman's Journal*. I hope it may come to something, and I do not see why it should not become a distinct success. There must surely be a literary public in Dublin who could be developed into appreciation of a really good thing, if a good thing were put within their reach.

"But I have to thank you still more and much more for your kindly cordial expressions of friendship towards myself. I shall always remember those pleasant little dinners we used to have so often in the House of Commons. Now you are gone and Sexton is gone, and that particular table where we used to sit seems dismal when I settle down there.

"Very truly yours,
"JUSTIN MCCARTHY."

Photo by Elliot and Fry, London.

JUSTIN McCARTHY

Years later business called me to London, and I received an urgent invitation from my dear old friend to visit him at Westgate-on-Sea, to whose bracing air he had been exiled by his doctor. The temptation to see him again was irresistible.

An incident occurred on the journey from London which illustrated to my special advantage in what universal respect the genial literary veteran is held.

I got into talk with a gentleman who was the only other occupant of the railway carriage. We discussed Mr. Chamberlain, his views and career and prospects from standpoints directly opposed and in language as strong as courtesy would allow. In the course of our conversation I chanced to mention that I was going to see Justin McCarthy at Westgate-on-Sea, and he was warm in praise of his works.

Now, personally I happen to be the worst traveller in the world. Wherever I go I leave a trail of lost luggage behind me. So it was quite natural that, when the train stopped at Westgate-on-Sea in the midst of an interesting conversation and I saw Miss McCarthy waiting for me on the platform, I should at once jump out, leaving my bag behind me in the rack. Two hours later the bag came back by a special messenger from four stations away with a polite note from my fellow-traveller intimating that the fortunate mention of the fact that I was the guest of Justin McCarthy enabled him to restore it.

I found my dear old friend as well and as strong as when I parted from him more than a decade ago in the House of Commons, his memory as vivid, his humour as playful, his conversation as full of freshness and savour. He was delightfully situated at Westgate-on-Sea in a corner villa with a view of the sea ; a smaller villa over the way serves as a guest-house for his week-end visitors from London. Now and again, as he told me, he was stirred by an almost irresistible desire for a last look on Ireland. But the doctor insisted on the bracing air of Westgate-on-Sea, and the health he enjoyed there confirmed the doctor's commands.

The weather during my brief stay at Westgate-on-Sea

was most propitiously inclement, windy and wet, making out-of-door excursions impossible. My kind friends were distressed, and I was delighted. They had planned some pleasant excursions. I was to see the spot where King Canute got himself wet to the skin for the purpose of rebuking his flattering courtiers, whom I always thought had the best of that experiment. I was to see the spot where Julius Cæsar landed on the British coast. Indeed, Justin assured me he had always regarded the selection of this particular spot by the famous invader as a delicate anticipatory compliment to himself.

All these things I was to see, and didn't see and couldn't see, and much rejoiced thereat. I had come to visit, not Westgate-on-Sea, but Justin McCarthy, and the weather kindly decreed that I was to have him all to myself during the visit.

We went to Mass together in the morning in a covered vehicle, and left the house no more that day, but sat together in his cosy den, book and picture lined, our toes on the fender, and talked unheeded hours away. Truly such talk was a rare treat. It was the cream of a busy, useful, happy life, stretching back almost to the middle of the nineteenth century, the abstract and brief chronicle of the time.

There was no taint of personal vanity or personal bitterness in his reminiscences. His mind, to my thinking, was as incapable of harbouring an unworthy thought as the soil of Ireland is of harbouring a snake. He had in his time met everyone worth meeting and seen everything worth seeing in the Old World and the New.

What a list it was of his personal acquaintances and friends! In politics there were Lord John Russell, Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli and Bismarck; in literature, Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, John Stuart Mill and a host of others. For this list makes no pretension to be complete. I have merely set out at random the names that cropped up in the course of our conversation, and now I bethink myself that the category omits such literary giants as Lowell, Emerson,

Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, with all of whom he was on terms of familiar friendship.

It was pleasant for one who had read and worshipped from afar off to meet those great men almost at first hand, to be introduced by one who knew them so well; but it is a pleasure not to be passed on to the reader. It would be quite impossible to convey in written words the savour of our familiar talk. It is the slight touch that completes the picture. I knew these men better from some passing phrase, some familiar incident, told by one who saw and heard, than I had known them in elaborate biography.

Justin McCarthy was naturally full of admiration for Gladstone, with whom he had been brought into specially close relations in the Home Rule Parliament, when they led the allied forces of the composite majority which carried the Bill. He admired, as all must admire, the splendid biography of Mr. Morley; but he seemed to feel, as I myself have felt, that it was emphatically "Morley's Gladstone," not Boswell's, the story of

> A creature far too pure and good
> For human nature's daily food.

For my own poor part, I should have liked to see that stately portrait supplemented by a genial, eminently human sketch by Justin McCarthy himself.

Of John Bright he had much to tell. He considered him at his best a greater orator even than Gladstone. "He shot his arrow higher," was his phrase. Justin McCarthy's editorship of a Liberal London newspaper brought him into frequent and friendly communication with John Bright, who held a place on the advisory board. In those days John Bright's sympathy with Ireland was intense. Even the violence of the Fenians did not in the least affect it. The most sympathetic of Irish editors was not strong enough for this English enthusiast.

"We have to consider the feelings of our readers and the interests of the paper," explained Justin McCarthy.

"We have, first of all, to consider the interests of truth and justice," retorted John Bright.

John Stuart Mill, of whom he had many charming things

to tell, was not less earnest than John Bright in his Irish sympathies. I had a wonderful picture of this shy, retiring scholar and philosopher taking active part in a boisterous demonstration in favour of amnesty for Irish political prisoners.

Tennyson, Justin McCarthy found a little stiff and self-conscious of his own genius—

> As if the winds
> Blew his own praises in his eyes.

But Browning, whom he knew more intimately, he described as the most unostentatious and charming of companions, full of human sympathy and sprightly humour. In Browning's everyday talk I learned there was no touch of the verbal obscurity that is such a stumbling-block to the uninitiated, myself among the number.

Justin McCarthy's first meeting with Bismarck was specially memorable to him by reason of the unavailing toil with which he furbished up his German for the ordeal.

To his surprise and delight, Bismarck, speaking in excellent English, bade him talk in that language, if he had no objection.

"I am very proud," the great German said, "of the extent and variety of my English. I flatter myself that I could interchange slang with a London cabman."

In America Justin McCarthy's experiences were as varied and as agreeable as at home. He told me that on one occasion he was able to confound a Yankee who was boasting somewhat arrogantly of his knowledge of the States by the quiet intimation that he, an Irishman, had travelled through and through every State in the country, and had visited almost every great town to be found on their maps.

The Yankee guessed that "left him standing."

One American literary experience Justin McCarthy had was as delightful as can well be imagined.

On his first trip to New York he submitted "a longish short story" for publication to *Harper's Magazine*, and was gratified not merely by a notification of the acceptance of the story with a handsome accompanying cheque, but by

the further intimation that the editor would be glad if he could make it convenient to call at the office.

"Of course," he said, "I made it convenient to call. What young author could resist so flattering and so promising an invitation?"

The conversation opened with a compliment. The editor was delighted with the story. Did the author think he could let him have some more about the same length on commission?"

The author rather thought he could. About how many did the editor require?

"Shall we say about a hundred?" replied the editor.

"You may imagine my amazement and delight," said Justin McCarthy, rejoicing in the retrospect of that magnificent piece of good fortune.

In truth, it was a splendid commission, and it worked itself out magnificently to the last word of the hundred stories and the last dollar of the hundred cheques.

A scribbler of fiction myself in a small way, I declare I can imagine no more fascinating experience for an author.

Justin McCarthy wandered at his own sweet will through the wide and variegated regions of the United States, moving where he liked, staying where he liked, idling when he liked and working when he liked, finding in his wanderings and idlings the local colour for the hundred stories, whose price far overpaid the expenses of the unexampled holiday. I had myself a vicarious delight in listening to so delightful an experience.

So it chanced that Justin McCarthy made friends in America as many and as distinguished as at home.

As our day slid by in desultory and delightful gossip, whose even flow never halted or lagged, the signed photos on the walls, the signed books on the shelves or tables, were fertile in reminiscences.

Just one illustration, and I have done. In a conspicuous place over the chimneypiece I noticed a portrait of an old lady in whose face sweetness and dignity were wonderfully combined. She was, I learned, the wife of Lord John Russell, who was a very special friend of Justin McCarthy's, and had

sent him this portrait with a warm expression of regard a little before her death. Our talk naturally switched on from her to Lord John Russell, whom Justin McCarthy knew well, and so we were carried back to the days of the great Napoleon, for Lord John Russell knew Napoleon, and as a young man visited him at Elba.

On that occasion, as Lord John afterwards told Justin McCarthy, Napoleon bade the English people beware of Wellington.

"A few more victories," he said, "and Wellington will grow so popular with the army that he will seize the crown."

It was in vain that Lord John strove to explain that the British Constitution rendered such a thing impossible.

Napoleon merely smiled and shook his head as one that knew better.

While we talked there came to our ears the faint patter of a typewriter from an adjacent room, where Justin Huntly McCarthy was busy translating into drama his charming novel "The Dryad." At dinner-time he told us triumphantly that he had completed an act and a bit over while we had idled through the day with our feet on the fender.

But be it not thought that Justin McCarthy habitually dawdled. He lived his life out to the last as vigorous in work and enjoyments as in the days of his youth. Almost to the last he partook of the mild dissipations of Westgate-on-Sea, which, by the way, regards itself as a "genteel watering-place," by no means to be confounded with neighbouring Margate.

One story he told me as illustrating the courtesy of the locality, and possibly its lack of humour.

A lady spoke in strong condemnation of society fibs. She was specially hard on her own sex for their lack of candour in regard to their age.

Justin McCarthy cordially agreed, and gave a personal illustration. To appreciate this personal allusion it must be remembered that he was nearer to five feet in height than six.

"I quite concur with you, madam," he said gravely. "I never practise those subterfuges myself. I never deny

that I am over forty years of age, and never pretend to be more than five feet eleven and a half inches in height."

She looked at him in mild amazement. Politeness forbade further reference to the question of age.

"I should never have thought, Mr. McCarthy," she said meekly, "that you were quite five feet eleven and a half unless you told me so yourself."

But, of course, his chief resource and enjoyment in his enforced retirement were his beloved books. His son and daughter fortunately shared his taste. They were a literary triumvirate who in writing and reading found their chief enjoyment. Of Justin Huntly McCarthy's triumphs in fiction and the drama there is no need to speak. Miss McCarthy has made on her own account but one incursion into print—a charming sketch of Parnell. But she may be said, in a sense, to have collaborated with her father in all his later works.

For there fell on him in his old age one of the sorest trials of a literary man. His eyesight grew so weak that both reading and writing were strictly forbidden.

His daughter's unremitting kindness, he assured me, smoothed away even this misfortune. She read to him, hunted up his references and corrected his proofs. Her father was fervent in her praise. "I could do nothing without her," he said. "She is so quick, so patient, so fertile in helpful suggestion."

The Irish exiles at Westgate-on-Sea, all three, were keenly alive to anything that appertains to Ireland. Justin McCarthy, when I last saw him, was as deeply interested in the Home Rule Bill, as earnest for its success, as when he led the Irish party to victory in the memorable session when Home Rule received the deliberate sanction, not to be forgotten or recalled, of the House of Commons.

"No reform," he said to me at parting, "that has once received the sanction of the House of Commons has ultimately failed to become the law of the land."

CHAPTER XXIX

RANDOM REVIEWS

The book and the author—Jetsam and flotsam—Treasure-trove—Authors I have heard from—Una Silberrad—Jane Barlow—Conan Doyle—Critics I have heard from—Oliver Wendell Holmes—Justin McCarthy—Blowing my own trumpet.

AMONGST the miscellaneous duties of an editorial writer on the *Freeman's Journal* was the reviewing of books, for which the only remuneration was the possession of the volume reviewed. A big bundle of books arrived weekly from the London office, and were dealt out among the writers to whom the work of reviewing was entrusted. They were trashy novels for the most part, for which there was no competition amongst the critics. Fortunately, it was not necessary to read them through. A mild complimentary paragraph could always be contrived after a few minutes' glance through the pages. Now and again among this jetsam and flotsam of frivolous fiction I discovered a treasure. Though our usual notice of a novel by an unknown writer was a bald paragraph, it was a keen delight to me when I came across a really good first story to try to repay the pleasure it gave me by an appreciative review.

Among the books I met in this fashion amid a pile of rubbish were Una Silberrad's "Enchanter," Mason's "Courtship of Morrice Buckler" and Maurice Hewlett's "Forest Lovers." I, at least, had never heard of the writers before the books came to my hands for review, and it pleases me to remember that I appreciated them at the time.

Now and again, too, I received a kindly letter from the author whose book I had reviewed. Mr. Maurice Hewlett was unduly grateful for my praise of his "Forest Lovers."

Miss Una L. Silberrad wrote from Sunnycroft, Essex, to thank me for my review of "The Enchanter."

"You see," she wrote, "it is the first long tale I have written. I began it when I was twenty-three, and wrote it mostly on Sunday afternoons. As a consequence it was a very long time in writing, and got to be somewhat discursive in style. I am very glad indeed you overlooked the faults, and really liked 'The Enchanter.'

"Again thanking you,

"Believe me, faithfully yours,

"UNA L. SILBERRAD."

In a subsequent letter she wrote:—

"Many thanks for the book you sent me. I shall read it with the greatest interest, and value it always as a sort of token of the kind welcome extended to an embryo author by one of wider experience and more assured position in the world. I wonder if the public ever share the writer's opinion of what is his best work? I hope it (and the publishers) will share mine with regard to the novel I have just finished after only eight months' work. I do not know if it is a good tale or a bad one, but it could *not* be other than it is, and there is a character in it whom it is just a treat to know. But perhaps one day I will have the pleasure of sending you a copy, and you can judge for yourself.

"Again thanking you for your great kindness,

"Believe me, faithfully yours,

"UNA L. SILBERRAD."

Authors, like parents, often make favourite children that are not the best of the family. To my thinking, at least, the second novel was not equal to the first.

Miss Jane Barlow, who understands and interprets the Irish character more faithfully and more charmingly than any writer I know, in the following letter confesses to the same weakness.

"DEAR MR. BODKIN," she wrote, "Many thanks for your kind words about the 'Irish Idylls.' I am glad that you like 'Strangers at Lisconnel.' Perhaps I am inclined to favour

it because it was, like most sequels, less successful than the earlier volume; so my sentiment is like Francis' towards Cordelia: 'Most choice forsaken and most loved despised.'"

How delicately she insinuates that she was right in her estimate! Cordelia was certainly the best of *her* family.

The author's letter I value most was one received from the great master of fiction, having written about one of his stories, "A Duet with an Occasional Chorus":—

"DEAR SIR,

"I can hardly thank you enough for your kindly championship. I value it the more because the book has been somewhat mishandled by the critics. They would not judge it from a point of view of atmosphere, but of construction and incident, which is, as you have observed, a wrong standpoint.

"Your opinion helps me to believe that I have to some extent done what I set out to do.

"Thanking you once again,

"Yours very truly,

"A. CONAN DOYLE."

At this time I was myself a humble writer of books. I began with a short story contrived to fill a gap in a Christmas Number when I was acting editor of *United Ireland*. The result was, after a little while, a little volume entitled "Poteen Punch" appeared. My ambition as a story-teller was stimulated by the following letter received a short time after the publication of the book:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Among the heap of books which I found on my table, after returning from my summer residence, is one less dreary in aspect than most of the great pile. It is 'Poteen Punch,' which is a welcome relief from the dulness with which I have to struggle. Please accept my thanks for the little volume of pleasant stories, and believe me,

"Very truly yours,

"OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES."

My first long story, " Lord Edward Fitzgerald," was not merely published serially, but written serially amid the stress of other and more urgent work. Subsequently it was revised and published in book form by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. I was surprised and delighted at its reception by the critics. The publishers' acting director, Mr. Oswald Crawford, described it as " their success of the season."

My next novel, " White Magic," had the unique distinction that every line of it was written in the House of Commons in the intervals of Press and parliamentary labours. In a column-long article the *Daily Telegraph* unduly praised it, but the public preferred the first.

It is not my intention to run through the score or so of books I have written from time to time. I may mention that, in my opinion, " A Stolen Life " is the best of the lot, and this opinion was, I think, shared by Mr. Justin McCarthy, whose view carries weight.

" My dear Matt," he wrote when the book appeared, " I cannot criticize ' A Stolen Life.' It fairly carried me away. I am ready to believe in hypnotism or anything else which is made so real as it is in your book. I greatly admire your hero, and I am in love with Eva. I like all the people, indeed, except the villain, and he interests me deeply. The book is full of charming fancies and subtle thoughts, and some of your descriptions, such as those in the woodland and riverside scenes, have a refreshing charm about them. Indeed, the whole book gave me genuine delight.

" Ever your sincere friend,

" Justin McCarthy."

I must confess that the public and publishers preferred my detective stories, which were translated into French, German, Swedish and Italian, and republished in America. Indeed, what literary reputation I have obtained seems to have been obtained in Sweden, where almost all my books were republished, even a book of short Irish stories, " Patsey the Omadawn," in which the brogue is very prominent. It hurts my vanity to be compelled to believe that my popularity in Sweden must be due to the excellence of the

translation by Mme. Ebba Nordenadler, whose knowledge of the Irish dialect and of the English language is certainly remarkable. In her very flattering proposal to translate "Patsey the Omadawn" she writes :—

"I understand Mr. Rattigan's language perfectly. It is only the word 'pishogue' that puzzles me a little."

But this book is a record of things seen and heard, and I must try to abstain from blowing my own trumpet, though vanity will edge in a few words sideways now and again.

CHAPTER XXX

BOHEMIA

Newspaper office and theatre—A generation of actors—Sothern—The inimitable Lord Dundreary—Barry Sullivan—A splendid Richelieu and a wonderful Surface—Contrasted with Irving as Richard III—Irving's triumphs—College night in Dublin.

THE theatre is an adjacent province to the newspaper office in the pleasant kingdom of Bohemia. Front door and stage door are open to the critic, and he has a welcome before the curtain and behind it. As I have said before, the Pressman does not specialize in Ireland. He is what is known in domestic service as a " general," a man-of-all-work, to whom nothing must come amiss. So it happened that among my multifarious Press duties I was, with brief intermission, for twenty years or so the dramatic critic to the principal newspaper in Dublin. In this capacity I came to know more or less intimately all the great actors of my time, on the stage and off it.

One of the earliest and pleasantest of those experiences was my meeting with Sothern. Few actors can wholly divest themselves of the atmosphere of the theatre, in which the chief part of their life is spent. Sothern, as I remember him, was a most glorious exception to this rule. He shifted himself into and out of his characters with the most consummate ease. On the stage and off it he was equally natural.

He was in his own person as amusing, as original, as wholly delightful as Lord Dundreary, whom he created. Moreover, he was the one actor I ever met who as a speaker was wholly unaffected and spontaneous. His little speeches to the audience, when called before the curtain as Lord Dundreary, were as good as anything in the play. Nor was

it in the least surprising to learn that he had himself built up from the unstable foundation of a few dozen lines the part which he played so inimitably.

Once I remember asking him the stock question which of his many characters he preferred.

" I enjoy David Garrick most," he said ; " but I know I play Lord Dundreary best. If I ever live in men's memory after I am gone, it will be as Lord Dundreary. When other actors act the part, the kind old playgoers will say, ' You should have seen poor Sothern in it.' "

Barry Sullivan flourished (" flourished " is exactly the word) a little before my time, but he still held the stage gallantly against the younger generation who were knocking at the door, and I had many opportunities of seeing him in many different parts. He was an actor of the old school, with a curious up-and-down inflexion in his voice, an inflexion known only to the stage. A glorified barn-stormer was Barry Sullivan, yet capable withal of a force and passion that ranked him with great actors. I have seen few things finer of its kind than magnificent Barry as Cardinal Richelieu when he draws the sacred circle round the trembling maid and threatens to " launch the curse of Rome " upon the head of the terrified king. No wonder the " gods " roared their applause.

How easily a critic may be mistaken in an actor's aptitudes ! I remember Barry Sullivan was billed for Charles Surface in the " School for Scandal," and I anticipated, I must confess, a burlesque performance. Never was a man more mistaken. I went to scoff : I remained to praise. Seldom, if ever, have I seen a more spirited performance of the part—light, easy, graceful, with a touch of that devil-may-care recklessness with which Sheridan (the greatest writer of comedies in the language except Shakespeare) has endowed it.

Barry Sullivan's sun was setting when Henry Irving's was rising, and, naturally, Sullivan did not like Irving and affected to ignore him. Mr. Grossmith told me that Sullivan could never be got to play with Irving, though often asked.

Once, at the Savage Club, Barry Sullivan said to Gros-

smith : " I play for the public, sir ; I know nothing about Society. There is a young fellow, I cannot think of his name for the moment—bless my soul, I'll forget my own name next—that young fellow at the Lyceum——"

" Irving," suggested Grossmith.

" Ah, yes ; Irving. Well, he has got on wonderfully. If I had these legs and went into Society, it would increase my reputation."

" I remember once an amusing incident in Barry Sullivan's performance of ' Hamlet,' " said Mr. Grossmith. " The first gravedigger was a novice, and was overpowered at the thought of playing with the great Barry Sullivan. ' Whose skull is that ? ' asked Barry in his deepest and most tragic tones. ' I'm sure I don't know, sir,' the gravedigger answered. ' I had it all in my head a moment ago, but it is clean gone.'

" ' Alas ! poor Yorick,' said Barry Sullivan, finding his own cue. But the frightened gravedigger did not venture to get out of the grave. He fled under the stage, and the effect on the audience was that Ophelia was buried on top of him

There was, indeed, a startling contrast in the methods of the two great actors, Sullivan and Irving. It struck me most, I remember, in the love scene between Richard III and Anne at her husband's funeral. As interpreted by Barry Sullivan, the scene was broad farce. His courtship was extravagant beyond the verge of absurdity. He leered at the mourning lady triumphantly as he spoke his asides to the audience, who responded with yells of delighted laughter.

The approving cry of one of his admirers in the gallery, " Bravo, Barry ! That's the way to put the *commether* on her ! " made a most appropriate comment on the performance.

Irving, on the other hand, was at his best in this strange scene. It was the very perfection of hypocrisy. There was overwhelming passion in his voice and gesture when he declared :—

> " Your beauty was the cause of that effect.
> Your beauty, which did haunt me in my sleep;
> To undertake the death of all the world
> So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom."

You felt he could not fail to carry the heart of any woman by storm. The incredible became credible as one listened. It seemed natural, inevitable, that the fascinated Anne, even at the bier of her murdered husband, should yield her heart to the passionate pleadings of his murderer.

I have seen Irving in almost every part he played, and I think he played Richard III best of all. The superhuman energy, the grim, grotesque humour of the character suited him. Irving was supreme in melodrama (witness " The Bells "), and Richard III is the greatest melodrama that was ever written.

It is pleasant to recall that Irving got his first real recognition in Dublin, playing Digby Grand in " The Two Roses," and that he was always a prime favourite in the Irish metropolis.

A very special compliment was paid him by Trinity College, a compliment accorded once before in its entire history to the great Irish actress Miss Helen Faucit when she played Antigone in Dublin.

On behalf of the College an illuminated address was presented to Mr. Irving by its senior representative, and it was decreed that there should be " a college night " at the theatre, and that the dons and the students should attend wearing a distinctive red ribbon badge in their button-holes.

Never have I seen greater enthusiasm in a theatre than on that memorable night. It was a splendid performance. Irving was at his best, and when he came before the curtain at the close of the play it was a long quarter of an hour before he could get a hearing. He seemed quite overpowered by his reception. If he was playing a part then, he certainly played it superlatively.

" There are some rewards and some honours," he said, " so unexpected that they may well give the happy recipient a new zest for existence. Such honours you have heaped on me, my kind and generous friends. For the welcome you

have given me on these classic boards, and a warmer than you have given me here to-night, was never given to any artist, alive or dead, for the distinction your proud old University has bestowed on me, a distinction that shall be remembered as long as the annals of our stage shall last, accept the warmest and most earnest thanks that an overflowing heart tries in vain to utter."

CHAPTER XXXI

HAMLETS I HAVE MET

The many-sided prince—Barry Sullivan—Tom King—Sir Henry Irving—Booth—Benson—H. B. Irving—Martin Harvey—Forbes-Robertson—Confession and atonement—Robertson the greatest of them all—Stage traditions and interpretations—Slow music—Taking a call.

IT is the natural instinct of the dramatic critic to judge all great actors by their Hamlet. In this many-sided character all the passions, thoughts, feelings of our complex nature find scope and breathing space. Filial sorrow of the son in the presence of death, freezing terror of the mortal in the presence of the supernatural, profound, spirit-subduing reverie, mad, frantic passion, with a thousand shifting gradations of emotion, are all displayed. To every actor the character gives room for the development of his highest powers, while not even the greatest actor can hope to perfectly sustain it. Thus his merits and his shortcomings are made apparent.

I have seen all the great Hamlets and all the famous Hamlets (a far more numerous body) of the last thirty-five years. Barry Sullivan, Tom King, Benson, Booth, Tree, Irving, Martin Harvey, Forbes-Robertson and others. The list is a long one, and I have made no attempt to draw it up in the order of merit. Almost every Hamlet I have seen had some special quality of his own. Barry Sullivan, stately declamation ; Tom King (now hardly ever heard of), a royal presence and a majestic stride—" a splendid strut," one of his humble admirers called it. In the scenes of white-hot passion Irving was perfect ; and his son is scarcely less perfect. Tree displays marvellous versatility. Harvey is the meditative student.

In the scenes that made most demand on a great actor's power Booth was at his best. He realized, as far as man

could, the soul-searching power of awful soliloquy, " To be, or not to be ? " It is not possible to describe the change of tone and feature with which the wrestling with life and death and intense mental agony of the struggle were brought home so vividly to the hearts of his hearers. One little touch struck me as almost too natural to be the result of art. While Hamlet's thoughts run smoothly he lies back in his chair and speaks in a tone of philosophic musing, but, startled by the sudden fear, " Perchance to dream. Aye, there's the rub. For in that sleep of death what dreams may come ! " he leaps from his seat and paces the stage with the quick, irregular stride of restless agitation. In the scene with Ophelia the yearning tenderness of his love was ever apparent through the veil of the " antic disposition " he assumes. The audience saw, with deepening interest, the piteous struggle waged between his affections and his resolve.

But when all's said and done, of the many Hamlets I have seen Forbes-Robertson came nearest to perfection. I admired other actors for their several virtues, but he,

> So perfect and so peerless was made up
> Of every creature's best.

He was, in truth, the Hamlet that Shakespeare imagined and Ophelia described :—

> The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's eye, tongue, sword,
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> The observed of all observers.

It may be that my estimation of Forbes-Robertson is coloured by the over-zeal of the convert. For let the truth be spoken, when I saw his Hamlet first, while all London was still ringing with applause, I was distinctly disappointed.

My vanity still prompts the belief that the fault was not wholly mine, that his performance has since wonderfully grown in essential heat, in power and passion.

Even then his elocution, gesture, presence and movement on the stage were perfect, his voice most musical. But somehow to me he seemed " faultily faultless." In the most moving scenes I was unmoved.

This feeling I embodied in a column of disappointed criticism in the next morning's paper. My disappointment endured about a year; then my conversion came.

Forbes-Robertson was playing in "Othello" at the Theatre Royal, and my wife and a lady visitor wanted to see the performance. I took them there, and then begged to be excused. I concluded, not unnaturally from my premises, that if he had not fire enough for Hamlet he could never reach the fierce fervour of Othello; if his Hamlet chilled, his Othello would freeze me.

So I installed the ladies in their places and went off to the newspaper office, which was close by, to finish some work I had on hand. The work took me a shorter time than I had expected, and I was back in time for the last two acts of the play. In my life I had never a more delightful surprise. It was a new revelation of the character of Othello. The words the Moor speaks in the play I know pretty well by heart, but I had never seen or heard the man before as Shakespeare had created him. I had seen Salvini in the part (his best), and found likeness and unlikeness in Robertson's personation. Both were replete with the hot fire of passion, trembling in the voice and blazing from the eyes (for where, in my ignorance, I thought Robertson must fail he most excelled). But even in the whirlwind of passion his dignity was retained. There was too much of the wild beast about the Italian's Othello. Robertson, in the wildest paroxysm, was essentially a man.

My enthusiasm took practical form. At the end of the play I sent the ladies home by themselves. I returned to the office, hunted up and destroyed the somewhat perfunctory notice that had been written of the performance, and sat down after midnight to write a gratuitous column of undiluted praise. It was an atonement.

When I next saw Forbes-Robertson in Hamlet I found him even finer than in Othello. Whether the change was in me or him, or both, I will not presume to say.

It is strange how stage traditions hamper the performance of Hamlet, and how obediently they are accepted by competent managers and great actors. I never saw a ghost

of Hamlet's father that did not represent a decrepit old man.

I am not a stickler for scenic accessories, but, at least, they should never contradict the text. Shakespeare describes the murdered king as in the prime of mature manhood. "His beard," says Horatio, "was, as I have seen it in life, a sable silvered." But the stage ghost has a beard as white as snow, and looks far more like the ghost of old Polonius than that of Hamlet's warlike sire. Moreover, it is the stage custom to turn the limelight full on the apparition, and limelight is as trying to a ghost as to a lady of uncertain age.

The stage device of emphasizing passion by the shivering notes of a violin is always an abomination, but most abominable of all when Shakespeare is supplemented by the fiddle. Still more unpardonable, if that be possible, is the sin of Shakespearean actors who come before the curtain "to take their call," as the stage phrase has it. Nothing can be more grotesque than to see, as I have seen, the unhappy Ophelia rise from her newly made grave, and the ghost of Hamlet's father return from "sulphurous and tormenting flames," to bow and smile to an applauding audience.

In the scene in which Hamlet bids his mother

> "Look here upon this picture and upon this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers,"

almost every actor has a trick of his own, often absurd, always unnecessary, for illustrating the text. Barry Sullivan had two preposterous family portraits hung on the walls of the Queen's bedchamber, to which he pointed alternately. But the more approved device, adopted, if I remember rightly by Irving, Tree and, I fear, by Forbes-Robertson, is a couple of miniatures in lockets, one worn by Hamlet and the other by the Queen-Mother. A moment's reflection should surely suffice to show the incongruity of condensing Hamlet's description of his father to the tiny surface of a miniature—

> "The front of Jove himself,
> An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New lighted on some heaven-kissing hill,"

cannot be contracted into the fraction of an inch. It seems plain enough that by the counterfeit presentments Shakespeare intended the word-pictures of Hamlet. Hamlet saw his father in " his mind's eye " in fashion as he lived, and so showed him to the Queen. But stage tradition, however absurd, dies hard. I am glad to notice that Martin Harvey has emancipated himself from this absurdity.

While I am about it I may say that the conception of the play scene in Hamlet, which is common to all the actors I have seen, seems to me to be wholly foreign to the plain purpose of the play. Almost from the first Hamlet is shown in a frenzy of passion, which would have at once put the King on his guard and defeat his own purpose. There is no indication of such a frenzy in the text. Hamlet is there a sardonic searcher of hearts who watches " the galled jade wince " under the lash. A man in an unrestrained frenzy of passion would be incapable of the cool mockery of his reply to the King.

" He poisons him in the garden for his estate. His name is Gonzago. The story is extant and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife."

It seems self-evident that those words should be coolly spoken, but every Hamlet I have seen squirms across the stage on his stomach and yells the words into the ear of the King. Surely Mr. Forbes-Robertson is strong enough to break through this curious stage tradition and give us the scene as Shakespeare wrote it. There are no such anomalies to be found in his acting of plays—like Shaw's wonderful " Cæsar and Cleopatra "—of which he is the first interpreter.

CHAPTER XXXII

MORE ABOUT ACTORS

"Cæsar and Cleopatra"—Forbes-Robertson and Bernard Shaw—Vivacity and versatility of Tree—An impromptu interview—Inspiration or study—Mr. Balfour's imperturbability—Waller as Monsieur Beaucaire—A narrow escape—Criticism of the Prince of Wales—Sir John Hare—His opinion of Jefferson.

I COULD never hope to do justice to Forbes-Robertson and his charming wife in the greatest of Bernard Shaw's plays, "Cæsar and Cleopatra." It is a pet theory of mine that there is more varied and genuine delight to be got from the reading than the acting of a Shakespearean play. No company of actors, however gifted, can quite realize the characters for the audience as the imagination of a sympathetic reader realizes them for himself. Almost every character in Shakespeare is not merely perfectly drawn, but is important to the action of the play, so that a hitch, even in a minor part, is apt to throw the whole performance out of gear.

But it is quite different with Shakespeare's "great rival," Bernard Shaw. He needs the help of the actor. When I read "Cæsar and Cleopatra," I found it a curious mixture of high-flown extravagance and broad farce, both good of their kind.

Played by Forbes-Robertson and his wife, I recognized the play as a work of genius. Cæsar's character, as Robertson played it, was a fascinating study of the "superman," great enough and wise enough to be good-humoured, tolerant and beneficent, willing to be amused by the gambols of that smooth, sleek, cruel little tiger-cat Cleopatra. Kindly to everybody and everything, but turning all to the furtherance of his own ends, and pursuing his purpose with insight, forethought and masterful determination, in-

exorable as fate. One felt that the Cæsar of Robertson's acting was greater and truer than the Cæsar of Shaw's conception. It was the triumph of the actor over the playwright.

Of all the actors I have met, Tree possesses the greatest vivacity and versatility. He gives himself to his part with the most absolute abandonment. His range of character is without limit. From Hamlet to Falstaff, from Falstaff to Caliban, nothing came amiss to him. It is hard to believe, yet it is none the less true, that he created the success of that once popular comedy " The Private Secretary," in the character of the anæmic young clergyman, which one might fairly suppose to be out of the range of the full-blooded vitality which made his Falstaff the finest on the stage.

He told me an amusing little incident of the second night of the play, which hung fire on the first performance. It occurred to Tree that the blue ribbon of total abstinence would be an appropriate adjunct to the Private Secretary. But an exhaustive search proved that there was not a scrap of blue ribbon to be found on the premises. Finally, a bit of tape had to be painted blue to meet the emergency.

I had many chats with Tree on many subjects. He was good enough to lunch with me early in our acquaintance, tempted thereto, I fancy, by a large collection of Shakespearean engravings, on which I somewhat pride myself. Tree was in great form at lunch and after it, full of stage wisdom and humorous anecdote. As he was leaving I said to him :

" Your talk to-day was too good to be lost. Shall I make an interview of it ? "

" My dear boy," he answered, " I would be delighted if you could ; but you can't."

" To-night," I replied, " I shall send you a couple of columns of proofs for correction."

The only correction or comment on the proof which I sent him was the one word " wonderful," written at the end of the proof.

On another occasion I had a long argument with Tree on the anomaly of actors " taking their calls during the progress of the play," so destroying the stage delusion, which it is their special function to create and maintain. During that occasion in Dublin when the curtain rose in response to applause, there was shown on the stage, not the husband and wife just parted in a rage and mysteriously reunited, nor the murderer and his victim amicably smiling, but a tableau which suggested the continued progress of the play.

I am sorry to add that Sir Herbert, impelled, I doubt not, by the insistent folly of the public, has abandoned this salutary innovation.

I remember discussing with Tree the doctrine favoured by Coquelin that an actor should put on his stage passions like his stage clothes, coolly and conscientiously, with a keen eye to their adjustment and effect, that he should be always the imperturbable critic of his own performance. Sir Herbert repudiated the doctrine.

" You must for the time being," he said, " in body and soul, be the character you act. You move your audience in proportion as you are moved yourself." Horace, it will be remembered, held the same view: " *Si vis me flere flendum est primum tibi ipsi.*"

Sir Herbert once told me a little incident illustrating Mr. Balfour's imperturbability, which, in spite of its irrelevance, is perhaps worth repeating here.

It happened in the time of the Parnell crisis, on which so much depended, when the Irish party were in excited conference in Committee Room No. 15, and the result was awaited with intense eagerness by Liberals and Conservatives. Mr. and Mrs. Tree happened to be going down for a week-end to a country house, where, amongst other eminent politicians, Mr. Arthur Balfour was staying.

" All London was full of the subject," said Tree. " There was a buzz of excitement even on the railway platform, and an unprecedented rush for newspapers. This gave me a happy thought. I bought a pile of papers representing all shades of opinion, to help to make my welcome where I was

going. When I got to the place there was a scramble for the newspapers like a rush on the bank. There was nothing else thought of. Everybody stood round reading them. As Mr. Balfour, who had come down late, joined the party, one of his devoted followers handed him a paper with a look that Sidney must have worn when he passed to the other fellow that cup of water he wanted so badly for himself. Just then the luncheon-gong rang. So far as the rest were concerned it rang to deaf ears. But Mr. Balfour, abstractedly, put down his paper unread, and sauntered languidly away to his lunch."

In the character of heroic adventurer there is no actor to touch Lewis Waller, and he was at his very best in the part of Monsieur Beaucaire. The play fitted the actor, and the actor the play, to perfection. It is a dainty and delightful piece of work. The dash and daring of one of Dumas' novels, with its high-flown love-making and marvellous sword-play, is spiced with a delicate flavour of the humour of the "School for Scandal." Monsieur Beaucaire is essentially "a pretty fellow of his hands," a hero that has stepped, spick and span, out of a canvas of Watteau, whose wit is as bright and keen as his sword, and who affects superlatives in his love-making. Of Mr. Waller's acting in the part it can only be said that it isn't acting at all in the sense that the word is commonly used; the actor disappears in his part. There is no trace left of Mr. Waller, only the fascinating Frenchman with his pretty broken English, his boyish gaiety, his chivalrous daring and his playful humour remains.

The play was, it will be remembered, a tremendous success, and the portrait of Mr. Waller as Monsieur Beaucaire was the chief picture of the year at the Royal Academy. Even after this lapse of time it may be not without interest to recall the account which he gave me in an interview of its narrow escape from a disastrous failure.

"How," I asked him, "did you first fall in with 'Monsieur Beaucaire'?"

"I picked him up in an agent's office when I went to look for something else. 'Here,' said the agent, 'is some-

thing that might suit you.' And when I had read it halfway through I bought it."

"You played it at once, I suppose?"

"Not at all. That is the curious part of the story. I had it by me a year and a half before I attempted to play it. Then I feared I might lose my rights by delay, and resolved to put it on the stage."

"In London?"

"Not in London. Honestly, I had not the money to start it in London, or the chance. I took it down with me to Liverpool, where I was rather a favourite and where I expected a good reception, and brought it out well at the Shakespearean Theatre. As I said, I expected a big success, and I was bitterly disappointed. There was a moderate house and moderate applause. The people laughed at the right place and clapped at the right place. But all the time there was a touch of frost in the air. I felt in my bones that the play was not going as it ought to go. Two or three managers from the London theatres, including the 'Comedy,' came down to see the first performance, and went back again by the first morning train. There were a number of friends of mine in the theatre that night, but they did not come round the scenes to congratulate me, as I had half expected."

"Did the papers make up for the public?"

"No-o-o," said Waller, with a long emphasis on the vowel. "The papers were a shade worse than the public. Not abuse, you understand, but just tolerant criticism. Damned with faint praise—suggested improving away the whole performance."

"Surely they liked Monsieur Beaucaire himself; they could hardly have missed seeing the merit of that personage?"

"Tell me what you liked best in him."

"Well, I think I like best the way the French accent, grace and vivacity are preserved."

"That was just it; that was the result of just a year and a half's practice. I believe I transformed myself into a Frenchman. I learned to think in broken English—at least,

Monsieur Beaucaire's thoughts. Now comes the cruelty. Three or four principal Liverpool papers quietly advised me to drop the Frenchman and play it in plain English. I was a bit disheartened, because I knew the thing was good.

"After three days of this frost, one afternoon I said to my manager, 'I cannot stand it. I must have a game of golf, or I'll break down!'"

"Then you play golf?"

"Life without golf would not be worth living. Well, I went off to the links. As a rule, it takes only half a round at golf to make me forget every trouble. This time I went round twelve holes before I got rid of Monsieur Beaucaire. After that, of course, I forgot everything except how to get the ball into the hole. I had a pleasant surprise when I came back. As I stepped on the stage the first man I saw in front was Charlie Wyndham. That gave me courage. I knew the play was good, and I knew that Charlie Wyndham would know a good thing when he saw it. I sent him a note round, asking him to sup with me after the show. I must confess it was a nervous moment for me when we met.

"'Well?' I said, and waited.

"'Well,' he said, laying his hand on my shoulder, 'you have got a David Garrick play, my boy. Love, humour, dash, daring, everything. It is bound to go.'

"In that moment my fear vanished, for Wyndham knew, not his play only, but his London public, and his opinion was to me infallible."

"So it proved?"

"Exactly. A few days later I had a letter from the manager of the 'Comedy,' who had refused the play, reversing his decision and asking me to take it to his theatre. I need not tell you what a success it has been since."

The reminiscence is interesting as showing how narrow is the line between the success and failure of a good play, even after it has reached the stage. It frightens one to think how many are smothered unheard of in

the agent's office and "die with all their music in them."

A comment on "Monsieur Beaucaire" from high quarters is worth recalling. "One thing struck me with surprise," I said to Waller, "and that is that 'Monsieur Beaucaire,' whatever the merits of the play, was tolerated, much less applauded, in London. The French Prince is the hero, the English Duke is the blackleg. The old British boast is reversed in the play, and one Frenchman beats five Englishmen with ease."

"It is a curious thing," he answered, "that the Prince of Wales" (now King of England) "made much the same remark to me when he came to my room after he had first witnessed the performance.

"'Mr. Waller,' he said, 'my opinion of our countrymen has been enormously improved since I have seen your play.'

"For a moment I thought his Royal Highness was chaffing, if royalty could condescend to chaff, because the Englishmen in my play could hardly be considered favourable specimens of the race, and I hinted as much.

"'It was not the English on the stage, but the English before the footlights I was thinking of,' he answered. 'It was a wonderful exhibition of national tolerance and good-humour. If you were playing in France a play in which one Englishman beat five Frenchmen, or in Germany a play in which one Frenchman beat five Germans, they would have torn the theatre down about your ears. Our people laugh at French humour and applaud French valour with perfect impartiality.'"

Dublin has a reputation for dramatic appreciation, but on one occasion it certainly did not live up to its reputation. When Hare visited Dublin first with the delightful comedy "A Pair of Spectacles," the performance was very coldly received by the Dublin Press, and, as a consequence, Sir John, who was himself a great admirer of the play, declined for some years afterwards to come to Dublin. There was, however, one exception to the disparagement. In the paper with which I was connected there appeared, I am glad to

remember, over a column of enthusiastic appreciation. That fact recommended me to the kindness of Sir John when he next visited our city. Of all the actors I have met, there was none more free from the least trace of stage mannerism or affectation.

In the course of our friendly chats he complained of the monotony of long runs. " You have to go down to the theatre night after night when other people are going to their dinner, and play the same part over and over again until sometimes your voice sounds to yourself like a phonograph." He was in accord with Tree rather than Coquelin in his belief that good acting comes by inspiration rather than by consideration.

" I thoroughly study and realize the man I am to personate," he said, " and then give myself wholly into his hands and let him play the part for me."

I never met a man more frank in praise of his brother actors. Salvini's Othello he regarded as the most adequate, the most powerful Shakespearean personation he had ever seen. The power and passion of it in the awful scene with Iago shook the hearts of the audience. But the most miraculous performance, the most absolutely perfect acting on the stage in his time, was Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle.

" For one whole act," he said, " Jefferson is practically alone on the stage and holds the audience entranced. No other actor ever performed such a feat. I saw him act a few years ago when I was in America. He is an old man now, immensely rich, living on a large farm of his own. But he goes back to the theatre to play once in a while, for sheer love of it, as he tells me, and whenever he goes the theatre is thronged to the doors—six hundred pounds at least at each performance. People who have seen ' Rip Van Winkle ' as children bring their children to see it as the greatest performance of two generations."

It is a mistake, I learned, to suppose, as is often supposed, that Jefferson is merely a one-part actor. " I saw him," said Sir John, " billed for Bob Acres in the ' Rivals,' and I was actually afraid to go, I was so enchanted with the

Rip Van Winkle, and this was so different. But he was the most delightful Bob Acres I ever saw. Of course, I heard the story that Jefferson's mind was affected by constantly playing Rip Van Winkle, but there is not a word of truth in it. He was a most charming man to meet in private life, and one of the happiest."

CHAPTER XXXIII

STILL ON THE STAGE

Grossmith—An audience of one—His special gift—Snapshots of Tree, Irving and Barrett—The gifts of Gilbert—His two tunes—Martin Harvey—A reluctant Bunthorne—Kubelik—A grim coincidence—Stage comicalities.

OF Mr. Grossmith I was always a great admirer, but I rather think the best performance of his that I ever witnessed was given to an audience of one in a drawing-room of the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, where I had the good fortune to be the audience. Never was more wonderfully displayed his faculty of compelling your belief in invisible people.

On this occasion, I remember, he led an imaginary lady on his arm to the piano, chatting to her affably while they walked. When he arranged her music-stool and turned over the pages of her music while she sang I knew she was there, though I could not see her, so miraculously, by a thousand little gestures and words, did he assure me of her presence.

" If," he said to me afterwards, " you talk seriously to a person in an empty chair, the audience will see the person in it ; that's the secret. But I don't leave those things to chance, I plan the position beforehand."

Mr. Grossmith showed me a notebook crammed with stray sentences and scraps of music with curious little diagrams scattered here and there. " Those are my chairs," he said, " with the invisible characters in them."

He then and there went into a railway carriage, leaving his wife and child on the platform. I declare I could see the grumpy passenger to whom he apologized as he stretched past him to kiss the baby at the door.

Beerbohm Tree, Henry Irving and Wilson Barrett he passed in review with words of friendly praise for each

of them and snatches of delightful mimicry. For Tree, Grossmith professed great friendliness and admiration, declaring him a master of tragedy and comedy. Then, in a moment, Tree suddenly appeared before me in action as he lived—voice, tone and gesture irresistibly perfect. Irving also he thought "great in everything." In moments of intense excitement light kindled in the great actor's eyes. You could see the passion shining through. "Wilson Barrett was a fine actor, and most conscientiously original. He studied Irving closely," said Grossmith, "for the purpose of reversing him in everything he did.

"If, for example, Irving enters frontways from the right wing and his hands hang down this way" (enter Irving as described), "Wilson Barrett enters backwards from the left wing with his hands over his head, this way," and Wilson Barrett made his entrance in turn.

As might be expected, Grossmith brimmed over with enthusiasm when he spoke of Gilbert. "I think Gilbert's comic operas the best of all," he said. "I'd go farther. In my opinion, his worst—that's not the way to put it, for he has no worst—his least good is better than the best of any other man. There is no one with such delightful, startling, original humour."

"Which of his did you play in first?" I asked.

"'The Sorcerer.' It came about this way. As the opera was originally written, John Wellington Wells was a very subordinate part. It was thought that anyone would do to sing the patter song, but it developed on rehearsal. Then Gilbert resolved to ask me to undertake it. I was doing very well in society entertainments, and I actually asked time to think it over. Looking back on the incident now, and knowing Gilbert as I do, I am surprised that he did not write to say that I might take as much time as I liked to think it over—that I might keep on thinking over it while someone else was playing it.

"Curiously enough, the 'Sorcerer,' though one of the very cleverest of Gilbert's things, did not go at first, and I am vain enough to think that I helped to pull it along with the teapot scene and dance and with a respectable

descent into Hades. ' Pinafore ' did not do well, either, at first in London. But it had a tremendous success in America. The Americans declared that the Londoners did not know a good thing when they got it. Then the Londoners were put on their mettle and flocked to the piece, and it ran for two years. I had a curious experience in ' Pinafore,' the most curious of my career. It was run first by a syndicate. They stopped the piece and closed the theatre about Christmas. But Mr. D'Oyly Carte, Mr. Gunn, Mr. Gilbert and some others reopened the theatre, and set the piece merrily running again. Then there was a royal row between the rival claimants, and one night, when the opera was in full swing, the syndicate invaded the theatre and attempted to carry off our scenery. I was singing Sir Joseph Porter's song at the time with my chorus of mariners. But the mariners were called off suddenly to repel boarders in the wings, and with their stage pikes they put the invaders to flight."

Here Grossmith gave a lightning sketch of a respectable invader in full flight with a sharp-pointed spear at his rear.

" It was in ' Pinafore ' that I had the longest run, nearly two years, though I had nearly as long in ' Patience ' and ' The Mikado.' Long runs are terribly trying to me ; the process never becomes mechanical, and it tangles my nerves.

" I have always got on well with Gilbert. He was most kind, though a bit of a martinet, as everyone knows. Sometimes he took you up short when you least expected it. You'd say, for example, ' It's a fine day,' and he'd regard that as a personal affront if he was dissatisfied with the weather. Then he'd allow no tampering with his work. With Sullivan it was different. If a bit of music didn't fit well into my dialogue, I could go to Sullivan and ask him to change it. But if I asked Gilbert to transpose a line, he would look at me and say, ' I suppose you think you could write the piece better than I ? ' which I couldn't, nor anyone else either."

Most people, I fancy, know the story of the man that wrote to Gilbert that he did not like the title " Ruddygore." The author might just as well, the critic thought, have called it " Bloodygore."

Gilbert replied in a short note that was dangerously polite :—

" Dear Sir,

" If you reflect a little you will perceive that there is a difference between ruddy and bloody. For example, if I spoke of your ' ruddy cheek,' you would take it as a compliment ; whereas if I referred to your ' bloody cheek,' you might possibly think me offensive."

Grossmith intensely admired the " Bab Ballads " (which, as Gilbert was in after life fond of recalling, were declined, with thanks, by *Punch*). He knew them, he told me, by heart, " backwards and forwards and upside-down." " There never was such a master of rhythm," he declared, " and of that wonderful humour that trips you up and throws you over. Sullivan had some difficulty in setting other people's songs, but with one of Gilbert's he went to the piano and played the music right off, the rhythm was so catching. Of course, you know that Gilbert himself has not the slightest notion of music. He declares that he only knows two airs ; one is ' God save the King,' and the other isn't." I had known that a good many masters of rhyme and rhythm, including Scott and Macaulay, had no ear for music, but this was the most astounding example of all.

Personally, I am music deaf, yet one Christmas, early in my reporter's days, I wrote the topical songs for the three theatres, and in all three they were sung with considerable success, though I myself could not tell if every line were sung out of tune. My plan was very simple. I wholly disregarded the music. I just took the words of a popular song and wrote a topical version to the same metre.

A curious little incident occurred in connection with one of those songs. It was sung by a charming little married lady, the wife of the proprietor of the theatre. Off the stage she was very quiet and shy. In the pantomime she was " principal boy," a lively and fascinating " Prince Perfect," a clever actress, with a delightful voice. Indeed, I never thought much of my own song until I heard her sing it.

One evening when I was alone in a box in the theatre the door opened, and " Prince Perfect " stepped in, sat down beside me and began to thank me for my song. Her costume was becoming but by no means voluminous. In her dress was she " Prince Perfect," the " principal boy " ; in manner was she the gentle little lady I knew off the stage. She might have been sitting in discreet morning costume in her own drawing-room with her children round her, for any consciousness she showed of her scanty attire. I was embarrassed ; she was quite at her ease.

Amongst the actors who come regularly to Dublin, I confess a special friendship and admiration for Martin Harvey. He brings the glamour of old romance on the stage. " Sentimental," I would call his acting, had not the word been " soiled by all ignoble use." His appearance, his gestures, every inflexion of his sympathetic voice, are replete with sentiment, lofty or pathetic.

He was always a great favourite with the Dublin ladies, who, without distinction of age, from sixteen to sixty, positively adored him. More than once I have seen him in my drawing-room an unwilling Bunthorne amid a swarm of love-sick worshippers, terribly embarrassed by the persistent and universal idolatry.

On one occasion, I remember, I introduced him to a row of youthful adorers, ranged together on a drawing-room sofa. He simply bowed his acknowledgment and turned away. I saw tears start into their beautiful eyes, and my heart was moved.

" Harvey," I said reproachfully, " if I had a row of lovely adorers, the very least I would do would be to shake hands with them." The kindly actor instantly made the girls happy by the touch of his hand.

On another occasion I introduced him to a very young and pretty girl by a wrong name. Her name, let us say, was Miss X. I introduced her as Miss Y.

" Oh, how could you ! " she wailed as he turned away. " Now he will always think of me as Miss Y."

I instantly rectified the error.

" Mind, Harvey," I said when I had introduced him cor-

rectly, "you are always to think of this young lady as Miss X."

The finest recitation I have ever heard was Harvey's rendering of Tennyson's "Edward Grey." I had read the lines often, thinking them rather trite and commonplace. When Harvey recited them I realized for the first time the infinite tenderness and passion of which they were capable.

Quite recently Mr. Martin Harvey gave me the surprise of my life. I had heard great things of his performance in "Œdipus Rex," outside Shakespeare assuredly the greatest tragedy ever written. It was the only Greek play I had ever read in the original, and reading it twenty lines at a time with the aid of a dictionary and grammar I was hardly in a position to appreciate its beauty. Since then, however, I have read it many times in various translations, with ever-growing admiration of the tremendous and overwhelming power. The Unities, that always seemed to me artificial fetters which hampered the genius of the dramatists of France, here lend directness and simplicity to the awful tragedy which grows like a cloud with little gleams of light through the gloom till the whole sky is darkened and the storm bursts.

In all humility I must confess that I did not think that Mr. Martin Harvey was the actor for the part. In tenderness, pathos and romantic melodrama I knew him to be supreme, but I did not credit him with the dignity and power that Œdipus imperatively demanded.

The moment he appeared on the stage, stately and masterful in the midst of imminent calamity, a demi-god of old Greek legends, by word and gesture dominating the panic-stricken crowd, I realized my mistake, and my admiration grew to an almost painful intensity during the progress of the play. In a long experience I have seen nothing more magnificent on the stage.

I am, as I have said, not musical, and only was once brought into close contact with a great musician. I was surprised to find the famous violinist, Kubelik, when I first met him little more than a boy, though then in the plenitude of his power and fame. Some little time before, he told me,

he had received twenty-two thousand dollars for four concerts in New York—over a thousand pounds a concert.

He had a very charming story to tell of Lord Dudley, who was at the time Viceroy in Ireland, and I am inclined to think the most popular Viceroy that ever held Court in Dublin.

"I was coming from Marienbad," said Kubelik, "and, stupid as I was, I forgot to have a sleeping-carriage for my wife—you know, I am only just married. Your Viceroy, Lord Dudley, heard of it, and he insisted on giving up his own sleeping-car. 'I am an old traveller,' he said to me. 'I can bear the hardship of the journey better than a young bride.'"

Kubelik told me he was never fatigued by playing; his violins were friends of whose talk he never tired.

I wonder what fatalists would say of the grim little story which I heard from Mr. Harry Nicholls about the actor Terriss, who was murdered on his way to the theatre.

"I was playing," said Nicholls, "in 'Secret Service' with poor Terriss at the Adelphi when he was murdered. I saw him an instant after the blow was struck, and I had to break the news to his son. The poor young fellow came right through London with newsboys in every street yelling the details of the murder. But he never noticed anything. The first hint he got was from my lips. It was the most terrible ordeal of my life. I trust in the time to come I shall have nothing to face like that. Poor Terriss was the kindest-hearted and most lovable man in the world. He had a curious morbid feeling about death. He used to jest on this subject with jests that seemed more than half earnest. The night before the murder he laid himself out stiff in the green-room, saying, 'This is how I shall look.' The next night I saw him lying there dead."

In the old days in Dublin during the Italian opera it was the custom for the amateurs in the audience to entertain the theatre with comic songs in the intervals between the scenes, and very often when the curtain went up the professionals on the stage had to wait until some popular amateur among the audience had finished his song.

A couple of verses of one characteristic specimen of those popular ditties still lingers in my memory, when so many things better worth remembering have escaped :—

As I was sitting gay, careless and free,
On the very top bench of the top gallery,
I spied a fair lady, all beauteous was she,
Down in the dress circle a-smiling at me.

Oh, red was the hue of her opera cloak,
And redder the blush of her cheek as I spoke.
Her intellect bright, for she laughed at my wit
When I shouted, "Remove the white hat from the pit."

Occasionally I have been the witness of a humorous interlude, wholly unrehearsed, on the Dublin stage. On one occasion I was present, in my youth, at a somewhat primitive performance of "Macbeth," most realistically produced, at one of the minor theatres. The stage manager's notion of realism was to suspend a blood-clotted dagger by an invisible thread from the ceiling, in order to give greater reality to the horror of Macbeth. But at the last moment the dagger could not be found, and a long oyster-knife was substituted.

"Is this a dagger that I see before me?" began the Scottish chieftain, when a shrill voice from the gallery interrupted, "D——n well you know it is an oyster-knife!" And at that unfortunate interruption the tragic muse fled from the theatre for the night.

On another occasion Mr. Rousbey was playing the part of Cardinal Pole in "'Twixt Axe and Crown" with singular ability. At the rising of the curtain he was discovered seated at a table in a meditative attitude. There was a moment's dead silence in the theatre, then from the gallery a shrill cock-crow was heard.

Rousbey leaped from his chair and advanced to the footlights threateningly.

"If," he said, "the person who has been guilty of that interruption ventures to repeat it I will have him removed from the theatre, and will myself appear against him in the police-court to-morrow." Then, without a pause, he added, in a voice of solemn menace, "Though lightly wears Elizabeth her head, I will contrive to bring it to the block."

The coincidence of the double threat was too much for the audience, and a prolonged roar of laughter gave Cardinal Pole further time for meditation.

Barry Sullivan was in his time the chief and special favourite of a Dublin audience. No other impressed them so thoroughly with the reality of his performance. On one occasion he was playing Othello—I forget who was Iago, but he had a rough time of it—when at last, in a frenzy of passion, the stalwart Moor seized his tempter by the throat and shook him as a terrier does a rat, and an applauding shout rang out from the gallery :

" That's right, Barry ! Strangle the devil, strangle him ! "

One other illustration how a quick wit saved the situation concludes my stage reminiscences. I do not claim to have been an eye-witness. I tell the tale as it was told to me by a colleague who was present, or said he was. The alleged hero was no less a person than Henry Irving, long before he became famous. He was playing the villain in a sensational melodrama. In the last scene he attempts to break out of prison, but just as he had filed the bars and was preparing his leap for freedom the report of a gun is heard outside, and he falls back lifeless into his cell.

On the night in question the gun refused to go off. There was an anxious moment as the villain stood poised at the window waiting vainly to be shot. Then suddenly, without apparent cause, he fell backwards on the floor of his cell.

" Gracious Heaven," he cried aloud as he writhed in his death agony, " I've swallowed the file ! "

CHAPTER XXXIV

ROME AND AMERICA

Leo XIII—An awe-inspiring Pope—An old cap for a new—The World's Press Parliament—An invitation—An interview in mid-ocean—Rear-Admiral Melville—Judgments and prophesies—The St. Louis Exposition.

AMONG the many remarkable men I have had the good fortune to meet, I was most profoundly impressed by Pope Leo XIII. In face and figure he was awe-inspiring as a being from another world. He made the great mystery of which he is the embodiment easy of belief; he realized the ideal of Christ's vicegerent on earth with supreme dominion over the souls of men.

I had gone to Rome on a pilgrimage, personally conducted by the late Prior Glynn, who had been for many years resident in the Eternal City and knew its wonders as he knew the palm of his hand. The pilgrims were fortunate enough to have a special Mass said for them by his Holiness in the Sistine Chapel, whose boy choir is the finest in the world, and on whose ceiling is displayed the masterpiece of Michael Angelo. But neither the choir nor the painting could for a moment divert the eye or ear from the wonderful old man who was the central figure of the scene. He seemed more spirit than human, and carried us with him into that other world to which he belonged. His face and hands were so thin as to be almost transparent, yet he did not give the idea of emaciation. The body was forgotten, while the soul shone out in eyes wonderfully large and luminous in which his whole life was concentrated. It would hardly have surprised us if, when he lifted his thin white hands at the Consecration, he had risen into the air and vanished from our eyes.

An audience followed the Mass, at which the good-hearted Prior must have given me a character far beyond my deserts, for I knew no word of Italian and was completely at his mercy. Certainly the Pope was most gracious. His smile, the sound of his voice, the touch of his hand on my head, filled me with a veneration that I cannot even try to describe. Though not more used than most men to the melting mood, I cried like a child during the audience.

It is fair to confess that at least one of the pilgrims, an American priest, was not so overpowered by the pontifical presence. On the eve of the audience the Reverend Yankee procured a white biretta, the kind worn by the Pope, and carried it with him to the audience. Afterwards he was allowed to substitute the new cap for the old which the Pope had worn during Mass, an exchange almost as profitable as the change of new lamps for old in the story of Aladdin. Half an hour later he was offered by a compatriot four hundred dollars for the Pope's biretta. A few silver hairs found in the lining were valued at ten dollars each.

Some years after my visit to Rome I had the following invitation to represent Ireland at the World's Press Parliament at the St. Louis Exposition :—

" St. Louis, U.S.A.,
" *February 18th*, 1904.

" Office of the President.

" Mr. McD. Bodkin,
" 52, Upper Mount, Dublin, Ireland.

" Dear Sir,

" The Universal Exposition and Executive Committee of the World's Press Parliament have united in extending a formal and cordial invitation to you to do them the honour to participate, with other distinguished leaders of the world's journalism, in the World's Press Parliament, to be held at the Universal Exposition, 16–21 May, 1904.

" I trust that I may be favoured with an early reply, and that you will be present at this greatest assemblage of the world's journalists ever known.

" I am, dear Sir, with assurance of high consideration,

" Very truly yours,

" David R. Francis,

" President."

There is little to be told of a voyage across the Atlantic, which has gradually come to mean no more than a week's stay at a very first-class hotel. It was the unfortunate Oscar Wilde, if I remember right, that was " disappointed " with the Atlantic. I do not share his disappointment. I cannot understand it. As our huge vessel forces her way through the thundering waves, crushing them into clouds of white foam at the bow, the sunshine striking through sets a score of broken rainbow curves shining and dancing in the foam. To right and left the waves go by in rushing hills and valleys—deep blue in the sunshine, dark slate colour in the shadow. Now and again the wind catches a huge breaker, twists and shapes it to a pointed cone and drives a spout of white foam like smoke into the air. For one moment the light, striking through the peak of the cone, changes it to a pellucid green, clear and bright as a flawless emerald. The effect is indescribably beautiful.

Most amazing of all is the illusion as you step from one of the hall doors on to the deck. The whole wide circle of the ocean, right away to the distant horizon, seems to slowly swell and sink with the swell of the vessel.

But I must not dwell on views which everyone who has crossed the ocean in a big liner has had the same chance of enjoying. I only allude to the journey because I met in mid-ocean a very remarkable man with whom I had many chats before we touched land on the other side—Rear-Admiral Melville.

He was the man who was responsible for the fleet which made such short work of the Spaniards. He was the Chief of the American Navy Construction before the war, during the war and after it.

The Rear-Admiral is not merely a remarkable, but a remarkable-looking man—the two things do not always go together. A massive man, broad-shouldered and big-limbed, with a leonine head and a face strong, handsome, yet benevolent : a great flowing white beard gives a patriarchal suggestion to his appearance.

When I first saw him he was sitting in an easy wicker chair in the corridor facing the broad stairs that led to the dining-room. I plopped down in another beside him, and opened the conversation with a remark about the weather, which on sea is even a more fruitful and piquant topic than on shore.

The steward had told me (for I sleep well) that it had blown a pretty gale during the night.

But the Rear-Admiral made nothing of it.

" You can hardly call it a breeze," he said, " to a big vessel like this ; the bigger a ship the better."

" In peace or in war ? "

" In peace and in war," retorted the Rear-Admiral sturdily.

" Yet some people seem to think," I ventured to say, " that in war, at least, the future is with the small, swift vessel—the alert wasp with the torpedo for a sting, whose sting is fatal to the biggest ship afloat."

The big man was roused at this heresy.

" Sheer nonsense ! " he replied. " The newspaper men may say those things and the newspaper readers believe them, but that doesn't make them true. You will get more fight out of a hundred thousand dollars than out of ten thousand, and a hundred times more out of a million. We are building big vessels — eighteen-, nineteen-, twenty-thousand tonners, and will keep on building them. England is doing the same ; she shows her sense in that. The bigger the vessel " (he repeated emphatically) " the better."

" The recent encounters between Russia and Japan hardly prove that," I hinted submissively. The war between Russia and Japan was in full swing at the time.

" They prove nothing at all," he answered, " except that the Russians were careless or reckless, or both. Their navy

was disabled in the first encounters. The Japs are prompt, brave and ingenious, no doubt, but the result was less the Japs' credit than the Russians' fault."

"But the torpedo-boats played a great part in those engagements?"

"Of course, of course. But a big vessel can deal with torpedo-boats if she is properly handled."

"And the mines?"

"Oh, the mines are a danger, no doubt, to little vessels and big. The chief danger of a mine lies in the fact that the vessel's magazines of explosives are kept as near the bottom as possible to avoid the risk of explosion from shot, shell or torpedo. But their position renders them all the more easily exploded by a mine. But this danger, too, may be evaded."

"Are the submarines really the vessel of the future?" I asked, an interesting question in view of recent discussion.

The Rear-Admiral grew splendidly indignant and denounced the submarines vigorously. "They are worthless, worse than worthless," he said; "they can never be of any use."

His opinion was identical with that of Mr. Wells, the novelist and scientific prophet. The visionary theorist and the practical expert were for once in absolute accord.

"What can the blind things do, anyway?" he growled thunderously, "as they go blundering about in the dark, not seeing beyond their own noses? I always did my best to keep them out of the American Navy. A sneak vessel should be quick, alert, keen-sighted, rapid in approach and in flight. This is what the torpedo-boat is, and this is exactly what the submarine isn't—blundering along in the dark at the rate of eight knots an hour at the outside."

"Have they not some contrivance to enable them to see through the water?"

"Oh, aye" (with fine contempt), "a lot of contrivances. We tried them all in our navy, and flung them away. England showed us the other day how a submarine should be dealt with. It should be rammed. She didn't mean it

a bit. It was her own submarine she rammed, but the lesson was good, all the same. The submarines have to come to the surface, as whales have, to blow. They cannot shoot then; they cannot use their torpedo-tubes; they can do nothing, while the enemy goes straight in and rams them."

He spoke with the warmth of active hostility. He rammed them with emphasis, as if he had used another word beginning with a big " D " instead.

I switched the talk on to another tack.

" You think the Japanese Navy will win ? "

" I think they have won. They have the Russian Navy on the run. Indeed, I don't know what navy the Russians have got to fight with."

" You don't think that ends the war ? "

" No, sir " (with great emphasis). " I think the Russians will win in the end, and I hope it. They are, at least, as good fighters as the Japs, and the numbers must tell. Besides, they have better horses and are better horsemen. They will come out on top."

" I thought American sympathy was with the Japs ? "

" Don't believe it. The American papers may sympathize, but not the thoughtful Americans. They see what it would mean—the East against the West, invasion like the Huns in the old days, only more terrible, more permanent.

" A triumph in Russia," he said, " would secure the Japs' dominion in China. What would happen if China, with her three or four hundred millions of men, should wake up as Japan has wakened up ? I visited Japan about forty years ago. They were savages then, sir. Most of them had no clothes except a loin-cloth. They hadn't a vessel bigger than the boats that are hanging at our davits. Their weapons were two-handed swords. I bought a lot of them when I visited the place as a young man. You could get a good sword then for three or four dollars that would cost a hundred now."

" A profitable investment, I should think ? "

" Oh, I gave them away to my friends. Swords are not as plentiful now—they have other weapons. Japan went to the front with a jump. Why cannot China do the same,

with Japan to teach her and help her? It would be a dangerous outlook for the West. Let me say right here, I don't want it."

My hearty concurrence in this view seemed to please him, and we interchanged cards. My offer of a cigar he refused. The Rear-Admiral had "no use for tobacco." Our talk passed to less momentous topics. He told me that drunkenness had almost disappeared from the States, and even moderate drinking was on the decline. He remembered the time when drunkenness was the fashion down South. But even down South there was little of it now.

I asked did they mean to keep on their President.

"Yes," he said. "Roosevelt is sure to win at the next election, and a good thing too. But if the Democrats concentrate, as I think they will, on Chief Justice Parker—right good man, Parker!—he will have a pretty close run. Your people generally go Democrat. I'm sure I don't know why, except to help the under dog. That's Irish all the time, and we like them for it."

The Rear-Admiral's panegyric of big ships is now in question. Since then they have had a great boom, but there has come a reaction, and the despised submarine, and not the dreadnought, is now acclaimed the warship of the future.

I don't mean to say much of the St. Louis Exposition, the biggest the world has ever seen or is likely to see. It was American, it was colossal, and everything connected with it was colossal. The "Inside Inn," where I put up, was in itself one of the chief wonders of the place. I do not know the precise number of rooms in the hotel—I doubt if they have been counted. My room was numbered 6402, and that, so far as I could judge, was about midway in the total. The space of the dining-rooms was to be measured not by feet or yards, but by acres; I had almost said miles.

Yet this huge structure, by many degrees the biggest hotel the world has ever seen, was constructed in a single year, and in a year more had wholly vanished. Vast as was the accommodation, every day hundreds of visitors, if not thousands, were sent away disappointed. The great piazza

in front was daily thronged with ten thousand representatives of the nationalities of the world.

I was delighted to find Ireland so popular in the States. An American Pressman guesses my nationality and questions me with inoffensive frankness. Thereupon he produces his card ; I respond with mine. He then formally introduces me to his relatives and such friends as are procurable at short notice. We all interchange cards. Each in turn cordially shakes my hand and utters the formula, " I am vurry proud to meet you, sir," and so the ceremony concludes. I brought about a thousand visiting cards home with me from the States.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE WORLD'S PRESS PARLIAMENT

A brilliant reception—Secretary Hay—American oratory—Japan and Russia—Princeton students at play—The college yell—"Tiger! Tiger!"—A remarkable vice-president.

ALMOST immediately after my arrival at St. Louis I was bidden to a grand reception of the foreign representatives of the World's Press Parliament to meet the Hon. John Hay, State Secretary for the Republic. The great city of palaces was ablaze with millions of electric lamps that emulated sunshine. The broad intervening lagoons were sheets of silver. The cloudless moon paled its ineffectual fire in the glare of manufactured daylight.

The ceremonial, to my unaccustomed eyes, was very strange. "The receiving line," as it was called, headed by Secretary Hay, drew up in a small antechamber and stood and waited patiently while two thousand five hundred guests filed slowly past. Entering at one door, they were introduced in rapid succession, shook hands with the whole "receiving line," numbering about a dozen, and disappeared into the great halls.

Tea was served by a swarm of Japanese girls in gorgeous costumes, making bright splashes of colour in the crowd. With each cup they presented a tiny nosegay of the tea plant. A Russian prince, who was one of the vice-presidents of the World's Press Parliament, was present at the function. I wonder if he enjoyed his tea.

There and elsewhere at the Fair I was introduced to several Japs with unpronounceable and unspellable names. They were all the very embodiment of bland courtesy. The impressions produced were so admirably described in the

St. Louis *Daily Globe Democrat*, which, by the way, is a Republican organ, that I am irresistibly tempted to quote a few lines :—

" There is something very striking and radical about the Japanese grin. It is employed with such frequency and such diffuseness. Is it propitiatory in its character, temperamental, or does it arise from genuine amiability ? You ask the man in charge of the exhibit a question, and he displays a toothsome smile. You speak to a workman finishing a booth, and his face broadens like a Jack-o'-lantern. Conversation is all carried on with the most open countenance. Is it as superficial as the American society smile which works by draw-strings ? The Japanese employ smiles with the same lavishness they employ in their embroidery and decorating their pottery. As a means towards an end they are extraordinarily valuable, and their cheapness must also appeal to the thrifty streak in the Japanese national character."

The World's Press Parliament held its first session in the Great Festival Hall, a huge building with a dome like St. Peter's, described as " the crowning glory of this miraculous exposition." The hall was on this occasion for the first time thrown open to the public. It was brighter than day with thousands of electric lights. The Press representatives of thirty-five different nations were assembled on the platform. The body of the hall held four thousand interested spectators of the proceedings. In the pit and galleries were the editors and literary celebrities of every State and great city in the vast Republic.

At the first meeting of the World's Press Parliament the chief speaker was the then Secretary of State, the Hon. John Hay. Very different is American oratory, of which I then had my first taste, from the British, as exemplified in the House of Commons. The Americans go in for " eloquence," they are much more flowery and more fluent. They run their sentences together in a way that must make it difficult, if not impossible, for a shorthand writer to hang on to them. Perhaps that is the reason that verbatim reporting is not in vogue in the States.

Hay's peroration was very powerful. "In the name of the President," he said, "writer, soldier and statesman, eminent in all three professions and in all equally an advocate of justice, peace and goodwill, I bid you a cordial welcome with the prayer that this meeting of the representatives of the world's intelligence may be fruitful in advantage to the Press of all nations and may bring us somewhat nearer to the dawn of the day of peace on earth and goodwill towards men. Let us remember that we are met to celebrate the transfer of one nation to another without the firing of one shot, without the shedding of one drop of blood. If the Press of the world would adopt and persist in the high resolve that war should be no more, the clangour of arms would cease from the rising of the sun to its going down, and we could fancy that at last our ears, no longer stunned by the din of armies, might hear the morning stars singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for joy."

I had myself the honour to deliver the opening address at the last session, on "The World's Press Parliament and its Functions," and I have to make grateful acknowledgment of the kindly way in which the address was received by the Press of St. Louis. One extract will suffice from the St. Louis *Globe Democrat*. It is interesting as a word-picture of the Japanese representatives at our Parliament :—

"One of the speakers at the Press Parliament spoke with feeling and emphasis against the evil of war in his address, and, being an Irishman, it seems scarcely necessary to say he spoke with eloquence. There is just a touch of the brogue on his tongue, and as he thundered forth 'War-r is murd-her,' it was interesting to glance at the faces of the Japanese editors present. While they had sat imperturbable through most of the address, and it is to be feared not entirely fathoming the Irish jokes of the speaker which had preceded his philippic against war, they were alert instantly when a subject so near to their almost constant thought was brought into the arena. One of them stroked and pinched his cheek in manifest agitation ; another turned

much paler and whispered excitedly to his companion; while a third somewhat unexpectedly applauded the sentiment loudly."

The most dramatic event of our last meeting was the delivery in succession of two addresses by the representatives of Japan and Russia. The speakers were eminently typical of their respective races. The Japanese, Ino Herado, seemed little more than a boy—short, slight, alert, intelligent, with that strange Eastern face that looks as if all the features had been flattened to the surface, and the curious turned-up slits of eyes—black, gleaming, opaque, inscrutable. He spoke of the difficulty of Press work in Japan, where there are as many as forty thousand distinct Chinese letters to be set up, and where the compositor, instead of tapping his linotype, or even picking his type from a case in front of him, has to walk round a big room in search of the particular letter he requires; and he grew fervent in his anticipation of the advent of a more rational system by the adoption of the Roman alphabet in their literature.

The Japanese, take them one with another, spoke the clearest and most idiomatic English of any of the foreign representatives, and this speaker was the best of them all. His voice, manner, action, gesture were a curious and admirable parody of European oratory, and forced one to remember that up to this his civilization has been largely imitative; already Japan has almost completely learned all that Europe has to teach, and thoroughly assimilated that knowledge.

Japan will not stop there. There is an ingenuity—an originality of purpose—in the nation that forces it to further progress, and the startling question presents itself: "What next?"

The Russian representative, Lio Nobokoff, was as typical as the Japanese of his own land—old, gaunt, rugged, with long white hair combed back from his forehead. He complained of the Press restrictions in Russia, for which he declared the Czar was in no way responsible. It was the lack of Free Press that hampered Russia in peace

and in war. He invited the World's Press Parliament to hold its next meeting in Moscow, where its presence could not fail to hasten the liberation of the Russian Press.

It is noteworthy that the Russian representative warmly applauded the Japanese, and the Japanese the Russian, in the delivery of their respective addresses. The project of a permanent World's Press Parliament was applauded by all. We had earnest invitations for our next meeting, not merely to Moscow by the Russian, but to The Hague by the Dutch, and to Athens by the Greek representatives.

One curious and characteristic incident may round off this brief account of the Exposition. At the close of a great banquet to the foreign representatives of the World's Press Parliament, Mr. Johns, the editor of the *Post Dispatch*, carried me off near midnight to "finish the evening" with "the boys" of the Princeton University, who this year held their annual gathering from all parts of the States in a great restaurant of the Exhibition under the "Alps," close to the Irish section.

I suggested that it was too late, but he curtly overruled the objection with the brief remark:

"You don't know our boys."

Sure enough, we found the festivities still in full swing. I was introduced and had to make a speech, and in response the full college yell was given by the company, closing with, "Ireland! Ireland! Ireland!"

A college yell is, indeed, a strange and wonderful institution. Its familiar sound, I am told, at sport and festival, makes the old man young again in America.

"Tiger! Tiger!" is an integral part of the Princeton College yell, and the tiger is the badge of the college. "Will you allow me," said one of the "boys" very gravely, after I had shaken hands with the president, "to introduce you to our vice-president?"

He brought me to the foot of the long table where I had noticed, with some curiosity, a big box with a grating in front. It contained a huge sleek, live tiger. The great

monster seemed almost bashful as he rose and stretched his elastic limbs lazily. I wonder what he thought of the strange scene he had witnessed so quietly through that long night? Perhaps he had previously rather fancied himself at yelling, and felt humiliated.

CHAPTER XXXVI

RIVAL ATTRACTIONS

Niagara—A contrast—The glories of the Falls—The woman who went over—A farewell vision—An episode—A curious correspondence—A remarkable girl—Strangers yet friends.

I AM quite conscious of the audacity of attempting to describe Niagara. The thing has really been done so well and so often that trite repetition seems inevitable. But no two people see this most tremendous spectacle of physical nature through the same pair of eyes. For each there is a distinct vision and new delight, and if he can put even some poor remnant of his bewildering, overpowering sensations into words his description must be, in some degree at least, original.

After a visit to Niagara the imagination feels the strain of its immensity, its grandeur, its overpowering force. However high-flown the anticipation, the reality surpasses it. The sublime picture possesses—I had almost said oppresses—the imagination, and one is under physical compulsion to write or talk about it.

I was fortunate in my visit, fortunate in the weather and in the manner of my approach. Instead of taking, as I should have done, the train directly from Chicago to the Falls, I got out at Buffalo and had a twenty-mile ride in an electric trolly-car to Niagara.

"Our indiscretions sometimes serve us well when our deep schemes do fall." Midway between Buffalo and the Falls we passed through the Indian-named hamlet of Tonawanda, the most silent, sleepy, sunshiny spot in the wide world. It was the vivid description of Mary Wilkins' charming stories suddenly realized to the senses. Keen as was my eagerness to feast my eyes on the Falls, this wonderful village tempted me from the car. The smooth, clean

roads and the pathways stretched long and straight through the lush-green grass and through the rows of wooden houses, prettily framed and brightly painted, with their infinite variety of " stoop " verandah, porch and pillar.

Unfenced orchards were everywhere in the full glory of their spring vesture, pink and white, radiant and fragrant. The place was all silent and seemingly deserted as the ruins of Babylon. There was no sound or motion but the fluttering and song of the big American robin, a bird with the plumage of our redbreast, the note of a blackbird, the shape and more than the bulk of a thrush.

No better preparation was possible than quiet, sleepy Tonawanda, calmly embosomed in apple blossoms as a contrast to the stormy rush and roar of Niagara. As we swept closer in the swift electric trolly-car a low, earth-shaking sound, like the deep growl of distant thunder, told me that the great wonder of the world was close at hand.

I was in luck, too, in my guide—bright, alert and intelligent—brimming over with information. Of Irish descent, of course, I might have fancied him an Irish jarvey but for the faint twang that had mastered the brogue and the quaint shape of his American buggy, with an awning stretched taut to ward off the rays of the sun that blazed from a cloudless sky.

I set out to describe the Falls. Now that I have come quite close to the moment when that tremendous spectacle first burst on my sight I realize how impossible is the task. Impossible to describe as it is to forget, the first sight of Niagara is an epoch in one's existence. From the bridge to Goat Island, which cuts the river in two, I had my first sight of the Rapids, an ever angry sea, with a heave of green wave and a splash of white foam rushing to the Falls at the speed of an express train, dazzling and bewildering in their impetuous fury. Many great writers have left it on record that the Rapids were to them more wonderful and more awe-inspiring than the cataracts, and a great painter has chosen the Rapids, not the Falls, as the theme of his historic picture. For myself, I confess

that, superb as are the Rapids, I can find little meaning in such judgment.

It was an awful moment, to be remembered for a lifetime, when I first caught a full view of the stupendous glory of the Falls. My driver and guide pointed to a bridle-path that ran out zigzag from the road, and on this I walked alone to an angle guarded by a stout iron railing. On either side the two great cataracts thundered past. A chill spasm of horror shot down my spine. I could scarcely breathe as I gazed on this spectacle, too vast and awful as it seemed to be compassed by human sight or thought. I had read many descriptions, I had seen many pictures—who has not ?—of Niagara ; but the reality transcended the wildest dreams of my imagination.

It was wholly different from anything I had conceived ; with all its colossal bulk and power there is a majestic dignity wonderfully impressive in this great rush of water, in striking contrast with the petulance of lesser waterfalls. The wide, deep river, perpetually fed by five great lakes, does not dash nor leap nor tumble from the cliffs. The waters roll over the edge with an even and stately motion. Viewed in profile, as I first viewed them, one has the vision of a colossal cylinder in endless revolution. In the American Fall the cylinder is pure white, with a greenish shadow where it touches the cliff. On the Canadian side, where the water is far deeper, the revolving cone is of a translucent green, like the sea in bright sunshine, flecked here and there with streaks of foam, but soft and white as carded wool when it thunders into the gulf a hundred and fifty feet below.

The white clouds rise up three hundred feet from that foaming gulf in strange and fantastic shapes, touched here and there with broken curves of brilliant rainbows.

Fifty yards from the foot of the Falls the water is calm as a fish-pond. Later on in the day I sailed in almost under the cataract in " The Maid of the Mist," the little steamboat that navigates the gulf. The volume of water, from the impact of its tremendous weight and velocity, buries itself far below the surface, flowing with a rapid undercurrent, and rising nearly a quarter of a mile away, rushes down a

narrow channel at a speed of thirty miles an hour. In those narrow Rapids the ill-fated Captain Webb was a victim to his own daring.

There are a thousand thrilling stories told about the Falls. Here a man leaped from the light suspension bridge, two hundred feet high, the biggest single arch in the world, into the gulf; there the famous Blondin crossed from cliff to cliff on a wire rope. I was pointed out a rock close to the cliff's edge where a sailor named Alvory, wrecked in the Rapids, had clung for four-and-twenty hours to a rock while the people on shore made vain efforts at rescue with boat and raft, and saw him at last whirled like a straw over the edge into the abyss. I was told the story of the silly Englishman, "the Hermit of Niagara," who lived for six months alone on one of the lesser islands in the Rapids, and spent hours daily hanging by his hands from the bridge that spanned the fiercest current, dangling over the death that waited for him in the wild water below, and ultimately caught him.

Vague traditions of Red Indian days still hover over the place. They tell that in those dim, distant times, the Indians, to appease the powerful god of Niagara, yearly sent the fairest maiden of the tribe over the Falls in a canoe to an inevitable death. How strangely this tradition resembles the maiden and dragon legends of the old Greeks! but here was a monster that no Theseus could destroy. Dogs have gone over the Horseshoe Fall and survived. The guide-books, however, unanimously declare that no human being ever outlived that awful experience.

But the guide-books are wrong. The feat was attempted and achieved by a woman of forty, who came down the Rapids cased in a stout oak case, and was picked up in the gulf under the railway bridge none the worse for her unique and terrible experience. I met the lady herself in a shop and bought her photo. Her comment on the exploit was laconic. "I'm glad I did it," she said; "but I don't want to do it again."

A most touching story is told of a young father crossing the bridge from Goat Island, where the Rapid runs fiercest above the Fall. The father playfully lifted the little girl

over the railing that fences the rush of boiling water. With a sudden spring she broke from his arms into the awful current. He cried out, and leaped the protecting rail in mad pursuit. In a flash, too swift for eye to follow, they were down the Rapids and over the edge, while the young wife and mother, widowed and childless in that instant, lay fainting on the bridge.

It is hard to believe it—Niagara once ran dry. Fed, as it is, by five great lakes of an average depth of a thousand feet, dry weather or wet makes no appreciable difference in the vast volume of water that passes over. But once Niagara ran dry. By an unprecedented combination of contending winds the opening from Lake Erie was completely blocked with ice. In a few hours the river emptied its unrecruited waters over the Falls, and for a day there was no Niagara. I met an old man, one of many who, on that memorable day—19 March, 1848—crossed the line of the Falls dry-foot. The American Falls, he told me, were absolutely dry. On the Canadian side there was, here and there, a slight trickle which silently vanished in white foam as it fell. Next day the ice-barrier burst, and the rush and thunder of the Falls was renewed.

It is a thrilling experience to pass right under the Falls; from the "Cave of the Winds" I had a glance through the mist of the great arch of gleaming green water that sweeps by overhead. Niagara as I last saw it is still vivid in my memory. I stood midway between the two Falls. The sun shone brightly on the dazzling foam. Faint, and wavering at first, a great rainbow arch slowly formed itself, one foot in Canadian waters, one in American. It rose majestically above the tumult, a clear, high arch of variegated light, framing the most tremendous spectacle in the great picture gallery of Nature. When I had looked my fill I closed my eyes, as I was being driven to the train, that this might be my last remembrance of Niagara.

I had two main objects in my visit to America; one was to see Niagara, the other requires a slight digression to explain.

It happened that, twenty years before, a little nicce of

my wife obtained a bronze medal and the glory of print for a paragraph story about a dead bird, which appeared in the Children's Page of "Little Folks." A fortnight later she got the following letter from Vermont :—

"My dear Madge,

"I saw your name in 'Little Folks,' and I thought it might do no harm to write to you, as it may be amusing to both of us if you will correspond with me. I am . . . a little American girl, fourteen years old. I have two sisters. One is Anne, she is sixteen years old ; Amy is nine years old ; they are just as nice as they can be. Anne is going to Florida this winter, and I don't know what I shall do without her. I have no brothers, and I am glad, for I don't like boys a bit—I think they are bothersome things.

"Have you very deep snow in Ireland ? We have had snow over a foot deep this winter. But it has thawed so that it is not so deep now. Sometimes it is three or four feet deep here. Do you take sleigh rides in Ireland ? We have such fun sleigh-riding in winter. Do you go to school ? Amy goes to school, but Anne and I have a governess. We have a little black-and-tan dog named Billy. Amy harnesses him to a small cart, and he draws it. We have three canaries. We call them the Captain, the Duchess and Prince Giglio. We have also a large tortoise-shell cat. When the river was low he used to go down on the stones and catch fish. He used to bring them to the house alive in his mouth, and we put them into the fountain with the goldfish. They are alive yet.

"In summer we have a saddle-horse, and have splendid times riding on horseback. Do you sing ? I took several lessons and enjoy them very much. I have been taking them since last June. Anne can play nicely on the piano. Do you take music lessons ? Have you ever seen Queen Victoria or the Prince of Wales ? I threw a bouquet to President Hayes once. There is a village near here where Garfield used to teach. We have driven through the village several times, but we cannot decide at which school it was. Please write soon. . . ."

No answer was sent ; it was thought to be a hoax, and the incident slipped from the child's memory. By mere chance I heard of it. I was charmed at the letter and unaffected frankness of the child, and answered at length, begging that I might be accepted as a correspondent in default of a better. In a fortnight's time I had a long and delightful reply. I will only quote the last few lines :—

" Last year Anne and I published a little magazine ; I will send you some copies of it. We published it for a year and then gave it up, as it was hard work and did not pay very well. I hope I shall hear from —— before long. I must end my letter now. Please write again soon.

" Yours truly, ——.

" P.S.—I haven't a shorter name than Irene ; if I had, you might call me by it."

Naturally, I fancied the magazine was a few pages of MS. got together for her family and friends. Great was my surprise when, a few days later, I received twelve numbers of " Our Magazine," neatly printed on good paper and well brought out, with the name of the editress, my little friend, then thirteen years of age, on the cover. It was a charming child's magazine, with stories long and short, and sketches and scraps, comic and sentimental. But the crowning surprise were the poems of my thirteen-year-old friend. Let me give a single example from a score. I much doubt if it is the best :—

The tall trees said to the murmuring wind,
" Shake down our leaves of gold,
Down on the grass and the flowers below,
They shiver in the cold.
We trees are covered with thick rough bark,
We are tall and strong and old.

" The poor little flowers are tender and young,
Last year they came from seed.
When cold Winter comes with its ice and snow
Warm blankets they will need.
Oh, dear wind, shake down our yellow leaves,
Cover the poorest weed."

So gentle the wind on the branches brown
Did softly, softly blow,
And the little leaves all yellow and red
Did rustling downwards go,
To cover warm from the frost and cold
The flowers that slept below.

The correspondence thus begun continued, while my child friend, whom I had never seen, grew to a woman. A score, at least, of long and confidential letters passed between us every year, till we grew to be familiar friends.

We called each other by our Christian names, we chatted of our families and friends, our pursuits and amusements. We knew each other more intimately than neighbours that meet every other day.

So it happened, as I more than once told her in my letters, my two chief objects in visiting America were to meet Irene and to see Niagara. When I wrote to her of my arrival, the three sisters came up specially to meet me in New York, and we dined together at one of the chief hotels.

At our first meeting Irene gave me her hand. "That's too cold," I said, "for such old friends as you and I," and I kissed her. She was all, and even more than all, her letters had promised, and our correspondence is more cordial than ever since we met.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A DELIGHTFUL VISIT

Burke-Cockran at home—A "frame house" on Long Island—Sherman's grandchildren—"The sea was boiling hot"—American women—Their special charm—Why works of art are taxed—Mrs. Jack Gardiner of Boston—Evasion of tariff—Statues of lead.

ON my return from the Exposition to the Manhattan Hotel, in New York, I found a letter awaiting me from Mr. Burke-Cockran, with an invitation to spend a few days with him at his residence in Long Island.

During my entire trip, in every town I visited I had heard the praises of Mr. Burke-Cockran sung, especially by enthusiastic Democrats, as the most eloquent man in America. There was no man in the States, not excepting the President himself, whom I was more anxious to meet, and it may be imagined with what pleasure I accepted the kindly invitation, for which I was indebted to a letter of introduction from Mr. John Dillon, whom Mr. Burke-Cockran counts, as he subsequently told me, as one of his closest and most valued friends.

Next morning the telephone bell in my bedroom in Manhattan rang me out of bed, and in a moment I was conversing with Mr. Burke-Cockran in his home in Long Island, some fifteen or twenty miles away. From him I had minute instructions when to start and where to go and what train to catch. I am a child in those matters, always missing my way, but the instructions were so clear and specific that I found myself without trouble at the railway station, where my host was himself waiting with a high dogcart to drive me to his home by the sea.

Mr. Burke-Cockran is a remarkable man, even to the uninformed eyes of a stranger. His appearance carries distinction apart from his reputation. In that massive head

and face there is vast intelligence and power, and in his manner there is a geniality that tells of the Irish descent of which he is so proud.

He was in especially good humour that day he met me at the train, and told me the cause with almost boyish eagerness. It seems that he had just won first prize for his favourite horse at the local show and had the silver cup with him in the trap. When we got to the house, his first care was to arrange to have a glass case constructed for the silver cup over the stall of the horse that won it. It was a curious idea and very typical of the man.

Mr. Burke-Cockran's mansion stands in a wide and well-wooded demesne, with its back to the sea. It is what is known in America as a "frame house," with wooden walls on a stone foundation. An excellent whip and rider, he keeps, or used to keep, a score or so of horses in the extensive stables situated about a quarter of a mile from the house. On the verge of his grounds there is a Catholic church, at which he is a constant and devout attendant. At the time I paid my visit to Mr. Burke-Cockran his other guests were the celebrated Mrs. Jack Gardiner, of Boston, and a daughter of the famous General Sherman, with her three children—a boy and two girls.

A very delightful house-party it was, full of consideration and information for the stranger. Somehow it seemed to bring me in touch with the stirring history of America to hear that the little boy with whom I played on the grounds (a bright and sturdy little fellow) had only a short while ago unveiled at Washington a colossal statue of his grandfather, who played so brilliant a part in the Civil War. I had an opportunity, too, while staying with Mr. Burke-Cockran of verifying my views about the women of America. Long Island is, as everyone knows, a very fashionable suburb of New York and dotted all over with mansions of millionaires. Each evening he drove me out to a big dinner-party, and everywhere a hospitable welcome awaited himself and his guest. It was regarded to be something of a distinction to be a guest of Mr. Burke-Cockran, and on that account I was received with special cordiality.

As I have said, from the beginning of my trip I was im-

pressed by the ease and grace and thorough naturalness that distinguishes the American women. I never felt this more strongly than at those stately dinner-tables to which I was welcomed as the guest of the great Irish-American. Each evening I went down to dinner with some charming American lady to whom I had been introduced only a moment before, and a moment later we were talking like old friends, with a freedom and absence of constraint that could not be achieved by less than a month's acquaintance in any other country in the world.

I never saw those ladies before and, I fear, am not likely to ever see them again—even their names have passed from my memory—but I have to thank them for an experience which will be a pleasant memory while I live. It has been well said that America is the heaven of women : nowhere else in the world have they so good a time, nowhere are they so cherished, cared for, petted and not spoiled. But they, in their turn, help to make it a heaven for the men. The American girls are, for the most part, beautiful, but their beauty only serves to heighten the ease of manner and quick intelligence which makes them among the most charming women in the world.

I look back with undiminished delight to my experience of an American home. During my stay with Mr. Burke-Cockran, the youngsters, with whom their host was always ready for a romp, eased my loneliness for my own youngsters, abandoned at the other side of the Atlantic. They were fair specimens of the American child, and the American child is peculiarly charming.

I remember well one very pleasant day spent in their company when the thermometer was over a hundred degrees in the shade and the sun's rays burned where they touched. We four made our way together down through the woods at the back of the house to the sea. I wonder is it right to mention here that the woods and shrubberies of Long Island are infested by a kind of vegetable reptile whose bite is poisonous ? It is known as poison ivy ; it does not sting like the nettle when touched, but it subsequently raises blisters which are very hard to heal.

The boy had been bitten on the bare legs by the poison ivy, and though the bite was more than a fortnight old the blisters were still there. I was about to catch the vegetable serpent in my hand when he warned me. He broke into the shrubbery right and left, beating down the enemy mercilessly with a stick; but the girls and myself kept cautiously along the path in Indian file, turning neither to the right nor to the left until we reached the sea.

Mr. Burke-Cockran keeps a handsome boathouse on the shore provided with all bathing appliances. In a few minutes we were ready for the water. But as I was going to step down the spring-board from the shelter of the cabin the skipper warned me back. He took up a full bucket of water from the sea and splashed it upon the spring-board, which steamed like hot iron at the contact.

"If you had walked there, sir, before I cooled it," he said, "you would not have had a half-inch of whole skin on the soles of your feet."

The recollection of that swim makes me understand what sea bathing is to the people of America when the sun is doing its best. The water was almost as warm as the air—not quite, just a pleasant coolness. The youngsters swam like ducks, just as they walked or ran, with no thought of fatigue. It was a good hour or more before we coaxed ourselves from the cool element back to the almost unendurable heat on land.

Protection sometimes operates curiously in America. Mrs. Jack Gardiner is an old lady who preserves all the brilliancy and vivacity of youth—a friend of Browning during his life; a friend of the great painter Sargent. A discriminating and munificent lover and patron of Literature and Art, she has built a palace at Boston and filled it with art treasures that almost rival, so I am told, the great Wallace Collection in London. Rumour has it that she purposes leaving this priceless palace to her native town. But meanwhile the indiscriminating laws of her native land have mulcted her of something like a quarter of a million dollars duty on the importation of those art treasures. It certainly seems a strange anomaly. Other countries regard

great works of art, even in private ownership, as a national possession, and sometimes, as in Italy, absolutely forbid their exportation. America, that should be so keen to acquire through its citizens possession of Old World art treasures, has the folly to put a penalty rather than a bonus on their importation.

Mr. Bryce, who was editor and proprietor of the *North American* when it was one of the most famous reviews in the world, contributed to by Mr. Blaine and Mr. Gladstone, gave me at his own dinner-table what may be taken as an explanation, at least, if not a justification, of this strange anomaly.

It seems that at first works of art were duty free. But it chanced that at one period that there was a great and sudden demand in the United States for lead, which was the subject of a particularly heavy tariff. A Yankee genius conceived the happy thought of running foreign lead into moulds of "Venus," "Juno" and "Jupiter," and shipping it wholesale to the United States as "works of art." It was after that the tariff on works of art was established, of which Mrs. Gardiner has been the chief victim.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ROOSEVELT AT HOME

Washington—A pleasant city—No slums—No factories—The Capitol—Legislature buildings—The White House—An accessible sovereign—Roosevelt's views on Ireland—Irish blood in his veins—His qualification for the position—"Lecky first made me a Home Ruler."

I ENDED my visit to America in Washington, keeping the best for the last. It is emphatically the most beautiful city I saw in the States. There are many who pronounce it the most beautiful in the world. It is a city of stately public buildings, of innumerable monuments and statues, of broad, smooth ways, of verdure and of sunshine. I never saw a city so full of trees. They are everywhere, lining every road or scattered in clusters through the innumerable parks and pleasure-grounds. Washington is a capital without being a chief town. There are scores of cities in the States that exceed its modest population of three hundred thousand. New York has at least twelve times its population. There are no factories in Washington, and consequently there is pure air. There are no slums. It is a political and social centre merely, and admirably fulfils its functions. I am not going to attempt a guide-book description of the American capital, but I may briefly note a few of its wonders. The Marble Library is one of the most spacious and richly decorated buildings in the world. There are very nearly a hundred miles of bookshelves in the library, with full space for four million five hundred thousand books. At present there are something over one million volumes catalogued and arranged. Yet so perfect are the arrangements of endless cables and book carriers that any book can be whisked in a few seconds from the remotest shelf in the vast building into the hands of the expectant reader. Amongst the boasts of the library is a

spacious reading-room for the blind, with a huge collection of books printed with raised type.

The Capitol calls for praise that I have no space to bestow. It is the greatest building in the New World. It represents the most successful effort of the men of modern times to match the spacious days of the Old World. The painting and sculpture with which its great halls and vast domes are decorated are the finest and the best of which America can boast. Within its ample confines there is abundant space for the Supreme Court, the Senate Hall and the Hall of Representatives. This latter building excited my special interest. It is, so far as I could judge, considerably larger than the House of Commons, though the number to be accommodated is less than half. But then the Hall of Representatives affords a comfortable seat and desk for each Member. The seat is selected by lot at the opening of the session and is retained till the close of two years' term. The galleries for visitors run right round the Chamber, which is circular in form. The reporters are, as in the House of Commons, at the back of the Speaker's chair. There is no gallery specially reserved for ladies, but to the public gallery, to which they are admitted, there is no grating.

The size of the American Chamber of Representatives is not, however, an unmitigated advantage. Mr. Burke-Cockran assures me it is about the worst hall in America for speaking and hearing. The strongest and clearest voice is there dissipated in echoes. If the hall is hard to fill, he adds, the audience is hard to hold. No position, no reputation, suffices. Unless the orator has something to say and knows how to say it, in five minutes the buzz of conversation breaks in upon his speech. The Congressmen have not yet acquired the House of Commons' trick of deserting the House in a body when a bore gets on his legs.

From other sources I learn that none of the difficulties he describes are ever personally experienced by Mr. Burke-Cockran. There is no Member of the Congress who can hold the House better. Prominent men of both parties assured me at St. Louis, Chicago, Boston and New York that he

is, beyond all doubt or question, the greatest orator in America, and many added that if he were a native-born American he would probably be the Democrat nomination for the Presidency.

I am afraid I have wandered from Washington. Let me come back to the White House and the President. I was, at first sight, not a little amazed at the simplicity of the residence of the President. A plain white building two stories high, exclusive of attic and basement, it is no bigger than an ordinary country seat of an Irish landlord. Its severe simplicity is relieved only by a portico with tall Ionic pillars. Yet this modest residence is the sole palace of the most powerful ruler in the world. The building greeted me from the first with a vague suggestion of familiarity. Afterwards I learned from the guide-book that the architect, "John Hoban, drew his plans closely from those of the seat of the Dukes of Leinster, near Dublin." The whole building is pure white, but it is the white of paint, not of marble. The house is built of Virginian freestone. "In 1814," we read, "in John Quincy Adams' term of office, the house was fired by the marauding British troops, and only the walls left standing. At the restoration the stone was painted white to obliterate the traces of fire." It is as the "White House" that the home of one of the world's greatest sovereigns, and the seat of his government, is known through the length and breadth of the globe.

At one end of the White House is a small one-storey building to which I was directed as "the President's office." A plump, bald-headed negro took my card to the President's secretary, Mr. Barnes, to whom I presented my letter of introduction from Mr. Justin McCarthy to the President. Then, in five minutes, it was arranged that I should have an interview with the President at half-past eleven next morning. I walked out into the green and sunshiny park, bewildered with the simplicity and promptitude of the performance. No fuss, no ceremony, no barriers, no lords-in-waiting; just send in a card and arrange an interview, as a matter of course, with the ruler of one of the greatest empires in the world.

Needless to say, I was punctual next morning ; but I was not three minutes waiting when the President, plainly dressed in light grey tweed, stepped briskly into the plainly furnished room and accorded me a most cordial greeting.

President Roosevelt looked very young for his age ; face and figure were wonderfully alive and alert ; there was not a touch of grey in his thick brown hair ; his eyes and smile had the vivacity of youth ; one would have guessed his age at thirty-five—forty at the outside.

After a hearty greeting he plunged at once into familiar talk about Ireland and her prospects. How was the new Land Act working ? What would be the position of parties and what the position of Ireland after the next election ? I told him that we believed in Ireland that the Coercion policy was completely exploded and that the Unionists were hopelessly divided, and that it was probable that the Irish party would hold the balance of power at the next election and could again press Home Rule to the front.

" I do not understand why pressure is needed," said the President. " The English should grant it for their own sake if not for yours. It is for her sake as well as yours that we in America desire it. We have many happy examples before our eyes in our own federal government. I have been reading lately," he added, " Morley's ' Life of Gladstone,' a wonderful and fascinating book. Gladstone's arguments in favour of Home Rule are, to my mind, convincing, but, apart from argument, his personal authority should count for much with the English people."

I mentioned that Dr. Emmet, with whom I had dined in New York, had allowed me to use his name as an introduction.

" You could use none of more influence with me," said the President. " Why," he added, smiling, " it was Dr. Emmet who, as our family physician, brought me into the world. I have a sincere regard for Dr. Emmet and his family. The Emmets have grown to be a great New York family. The name is as highly respected in New York as in Ireland. At the same time, let me say you needed no

other introduction to me than Justin McCarthy. There is no Irishman better known or better liked as a man and a writer on this side of the Atlantic."

I rose to take my leave, but the President told me to be seated.

" I am ashamed," I said, " to trespass on such valuable time. I have always thought you must be the busiest man in the world, except the Pope."

" I rather think I am," he said laughingly, " except the Pope. I think you were right in excepting the Pope ; but I would not except any other man on earth, not even the Kaiser. All the same," he added kindly, " I can spare a few minutes for a visitor from Ireland. I am deeply interested," he went on, " in the Gaelic revival. Lady Gregory's translations of the old Irish legends have afforded me extreme pleasure. I have also read with the greatest interest the works of Emily Lawless. There is one of her poems—I forget the name, but you will find it near the end of the volume—which might have been written by Parnell or Davitt, if to their other great gifts the poetical faculty had been added. By the way, I trust Mr. Davitt is well. I have a warm personal regard for Mr. Davitt, and indeed for all the Irish leaders. You must know I have Irish blood in my veins."

" We are very proud," I said, " of that fact in Ireland."

" Oh, I belong to many nationalities," said the President. " I have that one qualification to be President of the United States, which is a country of many nationalities. I am partly Irish, partly Dutch, partly English."

" Less English than Irish, I trust, Mr. President," I ventured to interpolate.

The President grew suddenly grave. " Every nation on earth," he said solemnly, " shall have fair play from the Government of the United States and its President. At the same time, I can thoroughly understand the feeling of Irishmen. No one can read history and fail to appreciate it. It was the history of Mr. Lecky that first made me a Home Ruler. I cannot understand how the author of that description of the Union could be himself a Unionist. I cannot

understand how any man could read that history, far less write it, without becoming a Home Ruler. It seems to me that expediency, as well as justice, are so strongly in favour of the reform that Home Rule cannot be long denied to Ireland."

CHAPTER XXXIX

APPOINTED A JUDGE

Lord O'Brien of Kilfenora, Chief Justice of Ireland—"Mrs. Maloney to you, Pether"—Jury packing, challenging the array—The MacDermot's white waistcoat—The situation saved by a pin—Contempt of court—A threat and a retort—Appointed as County Court Judge—Appointment challenged—An absurd affidavit—A fiasco.

A VERY interesting personage at the Bar and on the Bench was the ex-Chief Justice of Ireland, Lord O'Brien of Kilfenora. Like Sir Edward Carson, he took an active part in prosecutions under the coercion regime of Mr. Balfour, and thereby earned a temporary unpopularity in Ireland. But that unpopularity had completely evaporated long before the retirement of the Lord Chief Justice. It was impossible to maintain a permanent quarrel with a man of such genial good-humour. It was eminently characteristic of the man that he loved to tell the following story of his own brief unpopularity.

He was engaged for the defence in an action brought by a Mrs. Bridget Maloney, and it became his duty to cross-examine the plaintiff.

"Come now, Bridget," he began, "kindly answer me a few questions."

The plaintiff stiffened in the box and turned on him a look of withering scorn. "Bridget, indade!" she exclaimed. "Mrs. Maloney, if you plase, to you, Pether."

While writing for the *Freeman* I continued to practise at the Bar, and was engaged in quite a number of important cases. It so chanced that during my practice from first to last I was brought into frequent collision with Lord Chief Justice O'Brien, both as counsel and judge.

The first time we met in court, many years ago, was when I defended a number of tenants of the Marquis of Clan-

Photo by Clarke, Grafton Street, Dublin.

LORD O'BRIEN OF KILLENORA

Lately retired Lord Chief Justice of Ireland

ricarde, whom the Chief Justice (then Serjeant O'Brien) prosecuted before Chief Baron Pallas and a special jury at the Winter Assizes in Sligo. On behalf of the prisoners I "challenged the array," and the jury panel was quashed by the Chief Baron on the ground of gross irregularities. It was on that occasion Lord O'Brien obtained the soubriquet by which he is more generally known in Ireland than by his title of nobility.

We had a second encounter at the same assizes, at the close of the case for the prosecution of Mr. Jasper Tully under the Whiteboys Act for publishing in his newspaper reports of the meetings of the United Irish League. At the close of the prosecution, having asked Serjeant O'Brien if he had anything more to add, and receiving a curt negative in reply, I demanded a direction of acquittal on the ground that no case had been made against my client.

Serjeant O'Brien was at first indignant and contemptuous, but when the Chief Baron intimated that as the case stood I was entitled to a direction, he applied for an adjournment to mend his hand.

Against this I strongly protested, and declared somewhat flippantly, as I now consider, that it was no part of my duty to direct proofs for the prosecution. The adjournment was, however, granted, but the jury disagreed and the prisoner was discharged.

But it was not in the courts alone that the Lord Chief Justice and myself came in conflict. For one reason or another he was the subject of an occasional comment in the *Freeman's Journal*. Perhaps the most amusing incident in his career was his judicial objection to the white waistcoat of that eminent Queen's Counsel, The MacDermot.

By common repute The MacDermot, "Prince of Coolavin," by letters patent, "The wily Mac" in the affectionate familiarity of his colleagues on circuit, was the ablest and most astute lawyer at the Irish Bar. I have introduced him as Mr. Yorke into a novel of mine, "A Modern Miracle," as a counsel who contrived to convey to a jury that the worst case in which he appeared was a good

one spoiled by the advocate, and so secured their sympathy and verdict for his client. He was Solicitor-General and Attorney-General in Gladstone's last government, and it was by mere bad luck that he never reached the Bench, for which he was eminently qualified.

The MacDermot was many years senior at the Bar to the Lord Chief Justice, and before his promotion had constantly led him in court. But in a little incident that occurred in the Court of King's Bench, Lord O'Brien's fine sense of decorum overruled those considerations. Next day in the *Freeman's Journal* appeared a leading article on "MacDermot's White Waistcoat."

"There are many things eminent counsel may do on his way from the Bar to the Bench that to the ordinary lay mind seem somewhat questionable. He may turn his coat with impunity and even with advantage. But he must never wear a white waistcoat when appearing before a Lord Chief Justice. This vital point of legal practice was yesterday decided by Lord Chief Justice O'Brien, *ex parte* The MacDermot, Q.C. We give the details of the important case for the benefit of the public and the profession. The MacDermot appeared in court as the leading counsel for the defendant in the case of Menton *v.* Corporation of Dublin, apparelled in the silk gown and starched band and the funny curly-pated horsehair wig that custom ordains for such occasions. So much is to be conceded in the extenuation of his grave offence. For on his manly bosom he wore 'the white waistcoat of a blameless life.' The obnoxious garment caught the keen eye of the Lord Chief Justice, whose sense of professional decorum is painfully acute.

"'I observe,' he said, 'that one of the Queen's Counsel appears in a white waistcoat which is not a professional costume.' Mark and admire the dignity of this, 'one of the Queen's Counsel.' The Lord Chief Justice of Ireland cannot condescend to discriminate between the Queen's Counsel who have the honour to appear before him. Or was it that his eye was so offended by the first glance at the obnoxious garment that he could not look again in the

same direction? He identified the waistcoat, but not the wearer. There is a member of the Bar in whose keeping the honour of the Bar is safe, who is recognized among his brethren as the highest type of manly independence. He splendidly vindicated his reputation. 'My lord,' he said, 'a judge in England stated last week that he would not hear any counsel that did not appear in Bar costume.' He did not state the name of the case nor of the judge. He felt he had done enough for honour by this public repudiation of an offending brother and this public exhibition of profound deference to the court.

"The Chief Justice of Ireland was not to be outdone by any anonymous English judge.

"'And I,' he said, 'won't hear any barrister who comes into court wearing anything unprofessional.' Here was a terrible situation. For a moment there was awestruck silence in the court. Would the Lord Chief Justice order The MacDermot's white waistcoat to be removed by the usher of the court and burned by the common hangman? Those that knew the man, who knew the high ideals that governed his professional career, felt him capable of that splendid exercise of his authority. But Mr. O'Shaughnessy saved the situation with a pin. The MacDermot pinned his silk gown over the offending garment and the case proceeded.

"There are many who will gravely doubt whether the Lord Chief Justice was justified in this toleration. It was paltering with the evil thing. He had, so to speak, judicial knowledge that the white waistcoat was there. It is a nice question if the dignity of the court was sufficiently maintained by a pin. The case suggests appalling possibilities. The Lord Chief Justice did not restrict his veto to white waistcoats. He would refuse, he said, to hear any counsel who came into court wearing anything unprofessional. He was plainly alluding to some other garment. Suppose an eminent Queen's Counsel came into court wearing an unprofessional pair of trousers? In this case decorum could not be adequately secured by a pin. Would the eminent Queen's Counsel have to be wholly removed, or would it

suffice to remove—but the subject is too painful to pursue further."

Rightly or wrongly, I got the credit of writing the article, which I cannot flatter myself was calculated to improve my relations with the Lord Chief Justice.

Our second last encounter was more dramatic. An application was made against the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* in a motion to attach and imprison him for contempt of court by reason of a comment which had appeared in his paper on the conduct of a trial at which Lord Chief Justice O'Brien presided.

The Lord Chief Justice also presided at the hearing of the contempt of court application, and as leading counsel for the *Freeman's Journal* editor I respectfully suggested that his lordship should not hear the case in which his own conduct was impugned. By way of reply he threatened to have me removed from the court by the police. I challenged his authority, and he thought better of the threat, and thenceforward, though he persisted in presiding at the trial, his manner to me personally was most courteous. When I wandered a little from the subject into the general question of jury-packing, his lordship asked me very politely if I considered that was quite relevant to the issue.

" Perhaps not strictly relevant," I replied, " to the main issue of guilty or not guilty. But should by any chance the court decide there has been a technical contempt of court, your lordship must, I think, also decide that my clients have rendered a great public service by denouncing the system of jury-packing prevalent in this country, and that consideration will surely determine the punishment."

Ultimately it was decided there was a technical contempt of court, but no punishment was inflicted.

At the conclusion of a long judgment by the Lord Chief Justice I humbly asked leave to say a word or two of personal explanation. I knew that I could only speak by his permission, and I knew that he would promptly shut me up if he knew what I was going to say, so I spoke with bated breath and whispering humbleness, leading everyone

in the court, his lordship among the rest, into the belief that I intended to apologize.

To understand what followed it is necessary to recall the fact that very many years ago the late Judge Keogh had, at the Cork Assizes, threatened Lord O'Brien, then a junior barrister, that he would have him removed by the police if he persisted in interrupting. Almost immediately afterwards, however, Judge Keogh returned to court and made an ample apology to Mr. O'Brien for having "used so unworthy a threat."

"My lords," I began submissively, "may I be allowed by the favour of the court to make a personal explanation in reference to some observations that have fallen from the Lord Chief Justice? In anything I said in the progress of this case I was actuated by a desire to discharge my duty to my clients, and I have, I believe, acted within my privilege as counsel. The Lord Chief Justice threatened to have me forcibly removed from court. The only precedent that occurs to my recollection—I think it will also be within the recollection of the Lord Chief Justice—is an occasion when a member of the outer Bar, now a great judicial luminary, was made, as I have been here, the object of a threat of personal violence. But in that case, my lords, the judge that used the threat had the manliness and courtesy to apologize to the counsel."

"This case is now concluded," said his lordship; "we will hear no more about it."

By a curious coincidence Lord O'Brien figured prominently in a very remarkable incident that occurred just after my appointment to the position of County Court Judge.

While I was on my first sessions Serjeant, then Mr. A. M., Sullivan, instructed by a solicitor named Mr. E. J. O'Meehan, applied, on behalf of Mr. Markham, a day labourer in Ennis, County Clare, to have my appointment annulled. The application was founded wholly on a very long, rambling affidavit purporting to have been sworn by this illiterate day labourer, setting forth in detail his reasons for supposing that before my appointment I had retired from the Bar.

He being admittedly unable to read or write, had his mark affixed, instead of his signature, to the document.

It so chanced that the application was made in the court over which Lord Justice O'Brien presided. On the strength of Markham's affidavit he made a conditional order that cause should be shown why my appointment should not be annulled. When the case came again for hearing the following affidavit, filed by the same illiterate labourer, threw a curious light on the proceedings :—

" I was working," he swore, " on the Inch Bridge Road a few miles from Ennis for my master, who is a road contractor. I returned to my house at Old Mill Street between six and six-thirty on that evening. A man named Joseph M'Inerney came into my house and said, ' You have a process got, haven't you, Stephen ? ' I said, ' To my knowledge, I have no process.' When I said this my wife got up and said, ' You have.' Joseph M'Inerney said to me, ' Come down to Mr. O'Meehan,' as he (Mr. M'Inerney) guessed that Mr. O'Meehan had a couple of cases like it. I went down with Joseph M'Inerney to a public-house kept by Miss Lally in Jail Street.

" When I sat down inside he came back, and when he returned he was accompanied by Mr. O'Meehan and Mr. Miniken, who is a Commissioner for Oaths. When Mr. O'Meehan came in he bid me the time of night and took the copy process which my wife had given to me. He then read a long scroll to me, and made some explanation about it. Until my wife told us in the presence of Mr. M'Inerney that a process had been served I knew nothing about the matter, as I never had any dealings with Griffin, the plaintiff, and I never knew that my wife had any dealings with him either. I was very angry with Griffin, as he had processed me without sending me any account, as I would have paid him by instalments, even if I had to deprive myself of tobacco to do so.

" When Mr. O'Meehan read the scroll he made some explanation about it, but I thought it was about Griffin, the plaintiff in the process, as he had never given me any notice that I owed him any money before processing me, and

I thought he should have come himself or sent a messenger before processing me for such a trifling sum. I never knew that the scroll read to me by Mr. O'Meehan, which I now know was an affidavit, had anything to do with Mr. Bodkin. I thought it had solely to do with Griffin, who had processed me. After Mr. O'Meehan had read the scroll to me I made an oath before the Commissioner, Mr. Miniken, and put my mark to the scroll, which I now know was an affidavit. After I had done this I had a pint of porter at Miss Lally's, and he had a small drink also; I don't know what it was. I was surprised to hear a few days ago what was being done about Mr. Bodkin, the judge, as I never knew anything about Mr. Bodkin whatever, and I learn that there are rumours that I am to get something out of the case, which are wholly untrue. I can neither read nor write, and if I got a hundred pounds I would not knowingly have done what I am now told I have done.

"I say most positively that I never authorized Mr. O'Meehan nor anyone else to take any proceedings with reference to Mr. Bodkin, and I made an affidavit on the second of January in entire ignorance of what the real meaning was, as I understood it was made for the purpose of defending the process issued against me by Griffin, as I never knew that the debt was due or got any account, and I say that the said affidavit must have been prepared before I was consulted in any way about the matter, as Mr. O'Meehan had it ready for swearing when he came to Miss Lally's to me."

On the reading of this affidavit Mr. A. M. Sullivan abruptly retired from the case, and the then Attorney-General, Lord Chief Justice Cherry, argued that there had been a gross abuse of the court. "A judge," he said, "properly appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant, had been suspended by his lordship on an affidavit of an illiterate labourer, which was plainly absurd on the face of it, and which was now sworn to be suborned. The Attorney-General demanded that the solicitor, O'Meehan, should, as an officer of the court, be called on for an explanation on oath.

His lordship refused, on the ground that Mr. O'Meehan had made no affidavit. A second application that Mr. Markham, who had made two affidavits, should be examined was refused on the ground that the case was at an end.

Some injudicious Unionist asked the Irish Chief Secretary in the House of Commons if he could state what had induced Markham to make the affidavit, and Mr. Birrell promptly replied :

" A pint of porter."

The order having been duly discharged by the court that made it, I settled down quietly to my duties as County Court Judge of Clare. Some months later I met the Lord Chief Justice at a social function, and he very kindly congratulated me on my appointment.

CHAPTER XL

ON THE BENCH

Dressed in a little brief authority—A trying position—Put yourself in his place—" Ordinary crime " extraordinary in Clare—Agrarian offences, the cause and the remedy—A wave of temperance—Two converts—" Always for life "—" My sowl's in your hands "—The Quilty heroes—Knocking at the stage door—Beneficent legislation—Labourers' cottages—Old Age Pensions—Demand for Home Rule undiminished—The good time coming.

I WAS minded to bid the reader a cheerful good-bye as I stepped up to the Bench, but it was suggested to me that a few farewell words would not be out of place. Very briefly I will touch upon my sensations and experiences as a judge, and on the social and political changes I have seen during the period covered by my judicial recollections. As the ship that comes from the rough waters of the open sea to the calm of the landlocked harbour, I passed from the strain and stress of arduous work to the *otium cum dignitate* of the Bench.

At first, indeed, my satisfaction was tempered by extreme nervousness. It is a very panicky sensation to sit in solitary state for the first time and lay down the law to an attentive court.

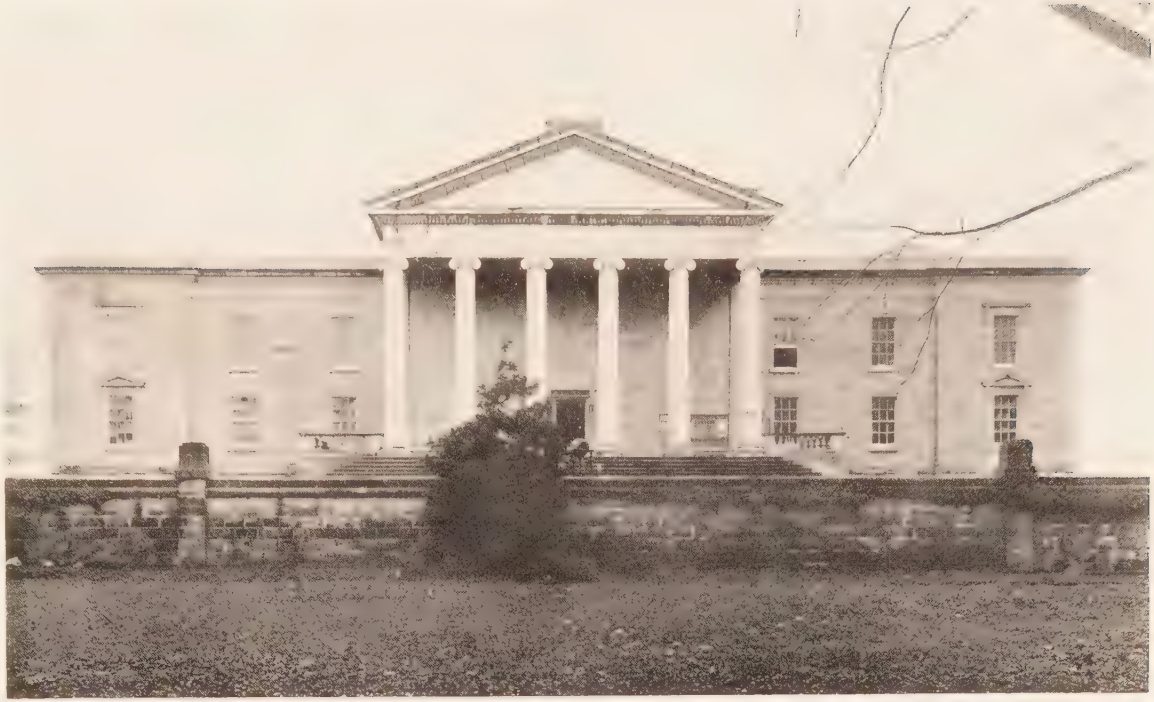
The Irish County Court Judge, as ex-officio Chairman of Quarter Sessions, enjoys (or endures) a criminal jurisdiction that does not appertain to his brethren in England. Theoretically, the magistrates who sit with him have an equal jurisdiction, but in practice they are accustomed to leave the conduct of the case and the amount of sentence following a conviction in the hands of the judge.

This sense of power is bewildering to the novice. There is a man in the dock, a powerful young fellow, it may be, who, man to man, could crumple me up with his right hand,

and there I sit on the Bench the master of his liberty. If I say he is to go to prison he must go, and he must stay in prison as long as I choose. For a judge who realizes what imprisonment means it is a very worrying responsibility this shutting a man out from all enjoyment, robbing him of a month, a year, five years of a life none too long at the best. The punishments I inflict are as light as the judicial conscience will allow; if I err, it is on the side of mercy. Once I remember having sentenced a man to two months' imprisonment. Then, for some reason I have forgotten, I changed my mind and reduced it to a month, and as the words were spoken I realized with a start how much it meant to him. A few words of mine had saved him thirty long, wearisome days in prison; had added thirty days to his life.

Luckily for me, there is very little criminal business at the Clare Quarter Sessions. What is commonly called "ordinary crime" is extraordinary—is practically unknown in the County of Clare. Nearly every offence there has an agrarian flavour, but the worst form of agrarian offence, the injury to dumb beasts, has almost entirely disappeared. Even in the wildest times the amount and character of those offences were greatly exaggerated. "Cutting the tails off cattle" seems a blood-curdling crime. It was not until I came as County Court Judge to Clare that I discovered that "cutting the tails off cattle" meant, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, cutting off the long hair tassel that grows at the end of the tail.

At present almost the only forms of agrarian "outrage" that come are the driving of cattle, the knocking down of fences or the burning of hay, for which I award compensation out of the rates. From minute inquiries I am convinced that all these offences are committed, often through mere wantonness, by a very small number of people, and that there is no sympathy with the offenders amongst the people. It is true that there is much difficulty in finding evidence to convict the offender, even in those rare cases in which evidence is possible, but this arises more from instinct than from feeling. It is a survival of the bad old times when the people, not without reason, hated the law



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as their persistent enemy, as the instrument of suffering and injustice, and it is pleasant to know that in a new and happier condition of things this instinct is fading from their minds. I look forward with confidence to seeing the people of Clare in the near future eager to assist the police in the enforcement of the law.

For the last year or two a great wave of temperance has invaded the County of Clare, and, from what I can learn, other counties in Ireland have a similar experience. There are a variety of pledges, each with its appropriate badge—a cross, a shamrock or some other religious or patriotic device. Hardly a witness comes on the table before me that has not one or other of those little metal badges pinned to the lapel of his coat. I cannot readily distinguish one form of pledge from another, but to my mind the most ingenious of them all, and one of the most effective, is what is known as the "anti-treating" pledge. Irishmen don't care to drink alone, and when they drink together one man invariably "stands treat" and pays for the drinks of the party. The result is fatal to sobriety. A party of ten go together to a public-house. Each man in turn stands treat, so that in the end each man is compelled to swallow and pay for ten drinks when one was all he either required or desired.

The "anti-treating" pledge is, however, for the protection of the moderate drinker. It is recognized that teetotalism is the only hope for a man who has once become addicted to drink, and even that security is not always sufficient.

I had before me a man who had taken part in a drunken row, but who now appeared in the dock sporting a temperance badge.

"I am glad," I said, as I let him off lightly, "to see you have taken the pledge."

"I had it before that, too, your honour," he responded cheerily.

"Well, this time I hope you have taken it for life."

"Oh, your honour," he expostulated reproachfully, "sure, I always take it for life."

Yet another story which I heard on reliable authority seems to indicate that the Clare converts to temperance were occasionally disposed to " keep the word of promise to the lips and break it to the heart."

An habitual drinker was inveigled by a zealous temperance advocate into a modified pledge that he would never take drink " inside the doors of a public-house." The alternative was supposed to be drinking at home, a practice which, it was anticipated, his wife would moderate or suppress.

The pledge, however, proved wholly illusory. Sympathetic friends carried his drink out to him in the street before they had their own at the counter, and the last state of the man was worse than the first. He was persuaded at length to supplement his original pledge by a codicil which bound him to drink nothing " inside or outside a public-house," and for a time it worked like a charm.

A little later some of his old friends met him prowling disconsolate down the street of his village. " Have a drink, Pat ? " one of them invited.

" Sure, I have the pledge."

" Don't I know that ? I'll bring it out to you the same as always."

" It's no use, Mike. I have it on me now not to drink inside or outside."

" Well, come and look at us, anyway."

The convert consented, and he watched them with envious eyes put away their liquor at the counter. Then one of the party, inspired by mistaken benevolence, hit upon an ingenious idea.

" What's your pledge, Pat ? " he asked in a voice that trembled with generous eagerness. " Not to drink inside nor outside a public-house ? "

" That's it."

" Begorra, there's a soft way out of that same. You stand on the jamb of the door, and you can take your drink with a clane conscience."

The plan was hailed with acclamation, and the teetotaler balanced himself on the jamb of the door, which was steep

and narrow. To make quite sure, one of the party knelt at his feet to steady him on his precarious foothold. The teetotaler trembled as the tempting glass was raised to his lips.

" Howld hard, Darby," he whispered entreatingly to the man at his feet, " howld hard, for the love of heaven ; my sowl's in your hands."

The " Quilty heroes " were, however, more strenuous and steadfast in their good resolve. It is by this title the inhabitants of a little village on the sea-coast of Clare are known, and the title has been honourably earned by a display of heroic courage.

In October, 1907, a tremendous hurricane drove the French vessel *Leon XIII* on the rocks close to the village of Quilty ; there she stuck fast while the huge waves kept battering her to pieces and her famished and shivering crew climbed into the rigging. All day they were seen from the shore appealing for aid ; all night their cries were heard above the roar of the wind and waves. The little village was in a state of frantic excitement. Three times the lifeboats put out to the rescue, and three times were compelled to return in despair.

Then the " Quilty heroes " took the matter in hand. The coracle, or fishing-boat, of the Clare fishermen is a frail structure of tarred canvas stretched on a light wooden frame, too frail, it would seem, to the ignorant to float in a pond. In these coracles the " Quilty heroes " braved the huge breakers of the storm-tossed Atlantic and brought the helpless crew by twos and threes from the wreck to the shore.

There is a vivid description of the rescue by the captain of the French vessel, who lay with a broken leg on the wave-washed deck while the heroic work of rescue was in progress. " There shall always live in my remembrance," Captain Lucas said, " the bravery of those Clare fishermen. How can I describe its magnificence ? Ah, they are brave ! They put out in their little canoes time after time, and the waves rolled over them and seemed every moment to engulf them. At one moment they rode over the white

crests buoyantly and bravely, another moment they were plunged down into a great valley of water. Ah! then we on the wreck cried, 'All is over,' but on they came again, nothing daunted. How they came in the teeth of that treacherous sea was only known to their own intrepid souls."

Once, indeed, a coracle was capsized, and its crew was spilt into the boiling sea. A wail went up from their women-kind lining the shore, but the stout-hearted fishermen somehow managed to struggle to land, emptied their coracle and instantly put out again through the storm to the wreck. The "Quilty heroes," with their coracles, marched at the head of the great lifeboat procession in Dublin, and they were decorated by the Government of France.

The first time I made the personal acquaintance of the Quilty men in court was on an application for compensation by an assaulted police-sergeant. To save a life or beat a policeman was all in the day's work at Quilty.

Later on a great wave of temperance broke with overwhelming force over the village. The heroes were all submerged. To a man they took the pledge, and kept it with religious fidelity. One fisherman only broke down, and when the backslider was on a fishing expedition with his mates the news of his lapse leaked out. Forthwith the unhappy Jonah was heaved overboard to swim ashore. Next day he took the pledge again and kept it.

Though I have never as much as written a two-line business letter on the Bench, having to concentrate my whole attention on evidence that is often conflicting and almost always confusing, yet my judicial duties, I am glad to say, have left me spare time for literary work which has this special advantage, that it can be fitted into the crevices of other occupations. Of late I have begun to knock pretty strenuously, though so far unsuccessfully, at the stage door. I have written several plays, which I am religiously convinced are better than my stories, and I have found one distinguished and delightful dramatic agent to hold the same view. But, unhappily, while I can readily get my

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stories published I cannot get my plays acted. I am fully aware that actor-managers, by whom my work is so courteously restored to the author, are overwhelmed by an ever-flowing tide of MSS. and that their lives are too short to read even the titles of the numerous plays submitted to their judgment, so I still flatter my vanity by the assurance that my plays are unappreciated only because they are unread.

If literary work has its occasional disappointments, there are no thorns in the cushion of the Bench. An Irish judge can flatter himself his life is useful as it is pleasant. He can do much to restore confidence in the law which has heretofore been lacking amongst the people. The Irish litigant is a keen fighter, but he is a good loser. All he asks is a full and fair hearing. I believe I am specially fortunate in the ability and kindliness of the solicitors and counsel who practise before me. We are a happy family in Clare, and our business is lightened by unfailing courtesy and good-humour. Self-exiled from the exciting arena of politics in which, for so many years, I played a humble part, I cannot restrain an occasional glance from outside the railings at the progress of the game, nor wholly subdue my interest in the team of which I was once a member.

No form of legislation has done more for the very poorest class of the rural population than the provisions for Labourers' Cottages and Old Age Pensions. The old people of Ireland are wonderfully self-sacrificing. I have already written that a marriage among the farming class is what the Americans call a business proposition. The bride "marries into a farm," which is made over by his parents to the eldest son. The bride's fortune is divided amongst the younger sons, and by this means they are often able, in their turn, to buy themselves a bride with "a bit of land of her own." At the same time, the old people, surrendering their rights in the land, are provided for by an elaborate agreement which secures for them various privileges, popularly called "liberties," in their abandoned holding. It is provided, for example, that they are "to have their support the same as the family, the exclusive enjoyment of

the west room of the house with the use of the kitchen fire." " The grass of a cow wet and dry and half an acre of ' mock ' (land made ready for tillage), with manure for the same." These are the usual liberties. But these liberties are the subjects of endless litigation, arising, for the most part, from strained relations between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. There is constant war between the west room and the rest of the cabin when the rival forces meet at the kitchen fire. In one case there were a succession of equity processes for the specific performance of a marriage settlement providing the " liberty " of a stone of good potatoes every week. Each succeeding session a battalion of witnesses testified to the perfect soundness and to the complete rottenness of those potatoes, and my impartial predecessor seems to have decided turn about in favour of one side or the other. When I suggested the simple plan of allowing and accepting the money value instead of the potatoes, both parties jumped at the suggestion, and a feud as bitter as the Montagues and Capulets was ended at a word. The right to cut three-farthings' worth of rushes on the bank of a stream has been made in my court the pretext for a protracted and costly litigation ; for Irish litigants " bravely find quarrel in a straw where honour is at stake."

But I am wandering from the subject of Old Age Pensions. In former days when an old farmer, like King Lear, surrendered his kingdom, he was sometimes evilly treated by ungrateful children. The Old Age Pension—hard cash paid regularly—makes him the capitalist of the family, for whose favours there is often the keenest competition.

The provision for building labourers' cottages has proved equally salutary. The Irish peasant was, as General Buller once declared, the worst-housed human being in any quarter of the habitable globe. His home was a mud hovel of which a respectable pig would be ashamed. Now the legislation and the local bodies combine to provide him with a pretty comfortable cottage and an acre of land at the average rent of one and sixpence a week, less than a sweated artisan pays for a squalid room in some filthy slum. There is no part of a County Court judge's duty more pleasant

than the administration of this Act. The countryside is dotted over with those pretty little cottages, often embowered in roses, with a well-fenced acre of well-tilled land in the rear. Nor is it the labourer alone whose way of living is improved. The farmer, now, for the most part, owner of his own land, is ashamed to be worse housed than the worker on his farm, and so the standard of comfort is raised all round.

But the change for the better in the condition of the people has not, so far as I can judge, in the faintest degree weakened the passionate resolve that inspired the century-long struggle for the restoration of the Irish Parliament, destroyed by what Mr. Gladstone described as " the baseness and blackguardism of the Union." I have lived through sad and strenuous days, when tenant's right was styled landlord's wrong, when the tillers of the soil had no greater fixture of tenure than trespassing cattle and were evicted with as little consideration, when the profit or the whim of the landlord was the law of the land. I have known cases where a notice to quit was printed on the back of the rent receipt to keep the tenant in absolute bondage. As a boy in the days of the Fenian rising I have seen elder schoolfellows carted away to prison for a generous revolt against an oppression that was unendurable. Personally, I have played a humble part in the land agitation and the national agitation of later years, and of late, from the post of vantage of the hurler on the ditch, I have watched the progress of the game with cooler and more deliberate judgment. I find the national aspirations as keen as ever, but I find a kindlier feeling pervading all classes of Irishmen.

For myself my hope is that I shall live to administer the laws of an Irish legislature in which Irishmen of all classes and creeds will combine to promote the prosperity of their common country.

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